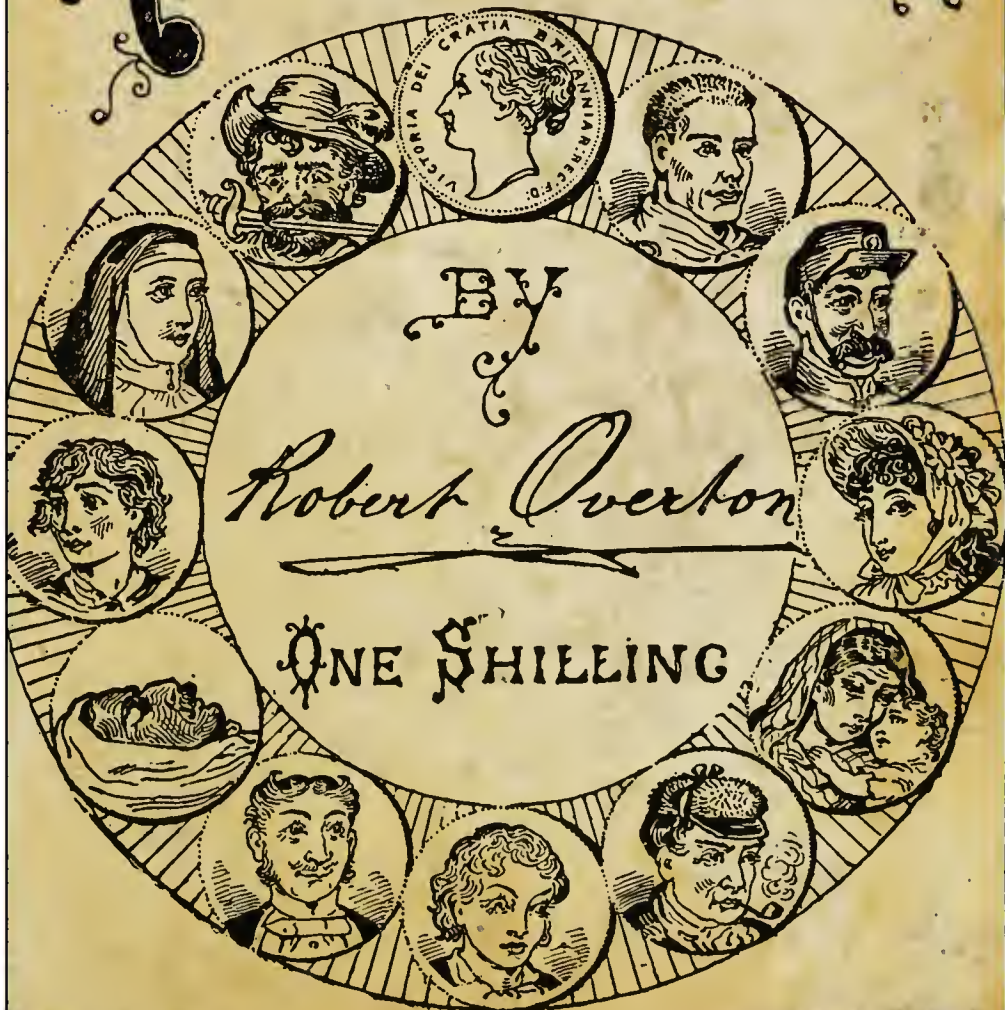
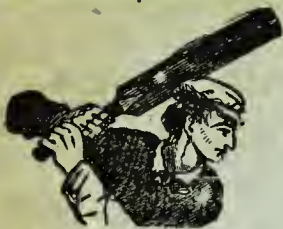


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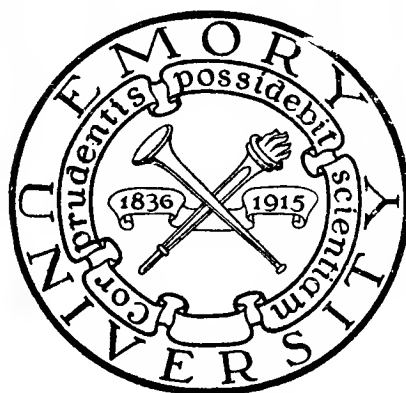
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# A ROUND DOZEN :

## Character Sketches,

By ROBERT OVERTON.

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LONDON : DEAN & SON, 160A, FLEET STREET, E.C.





## CEREMONY OF INTRODUCTION.

---



HAVE the honor to introduce to you the following assortment of my children :—

A GAOL-BIRD,

A FEDERAL SOLDIER,

A SAILOR,

A WOMAN AND A CHILD,

A COSTERMONGER,

AN IDIOT LAD,

A VILLAGE COUNTERJUMPER,

AN ADVANCED RADICAL,

A CITY ARAB,

A SISTER OF MERCY,

A SELECT PARTY OF DISTINGUISHED FOREIGNERS.

It is probable you have met with some of them before, either in a previous *type* of existence in the Magazine world, or in Elocutionary-Entertainment Halls, where (according to press reports which are being continually brought to their father's notice) they have been responsible for many tears and much laughter.



For their creation I admit my culpability ; but, having said so much, **I must** leave them to speak for themselves.

In drawing the illustrative heads which adorn my cover, my artist has given a prominent position to a representation of a current coin of the realm. Bearing, as it does, the effigy of our Sovereign Lady the Queen, feelings of loyalty alone would have dictated the propriety of this pre-eminence, for which, however, there is another reason—for the—ahem !—One Shilling—represents *your* contribution, “gentle reader,” to my “Round Dozen.”





## CAGED!\*

### A GAOL-BIRD'S STORY.

---



HE shades of night 'ad closed round Seving Dials, an' the public 'ouses was about for to foller their example.

I 'ad been a-doin' a little bit on my 'ead at Clerkenwell—"three months with"—in consequence of a little misunderstandingin' about a silk 'andkerchief.

I 'ad been let out that day ; not a nice sort of a day to be turned into the streets, even out of a prison ! Snow fallin' everywhere, thicker as the night come on, an' the wind blowin' colder an' colder every minute, freezin' the 'eaps of slushy snow. As I walked along, the winders was all bright with the warm fires a-blazin' within the swells' 'ouses. I could 'ear the 'appy blokes inside laughin', an' dancin', an'

makin' merry, and I knowed they all 'ad plenty to eat an' drink. The theaytres was all ablaze with light, an' a-comin' out of 'em into their carriages was people as any thief what wasn't a rank outsider could have made a month's livin' out of in two minutes. I 'ad likewise noticed as there seemed a extra show on at the churches, an' by-an'-by out crashed the bells, ringin' thro' the cold air, thick with the fallin' snow, an' some people passin' me as I slouched against the wall says to each other, wery cheery, "A merry Christmas to you—A merry Christmas."

"Oh," I says to myself, "It's merry Christmas, is it? I shouldn't 'a thought it. I ain't pertickler merry myself—not what yer might call downright roarin' boisterous—so I s'pose that's why I forgot as it was merry Christmas."

"Now, then," says a perleeceman, a-comin' up to me, "what do yer want 'angin' about 'ere, eh?"

"Well, guv'ner," I says, "I want a good many things. I won't go so far as to say that I couldn't do with a bit of a fire an' a bit of a bed; and I've sorter got a dim idea as I want a bit o' supper. Between you an' me," I says, "I could make a fool of about 'alf a roast bullock, with baked pertaters. But don't let it go no further," I says, "becos it might 'urt the feelin's o' some o' these 'ere Christian people a-comin' out of Church."

"You'll 'ave to go further yerself," says the perleeceman. "None o' yer nonsense 'ere. I know yer. 'Ow would Buckin'ham Palace or Marlboro' 'Ouse do for yer?"

"I might put up with 'em for a night or two till my town 'ouse is in order," I says; "but I've left my dress soot be'ind me. Besides, I ain't expected till the next Droring Room, an' I wouldn't care for to take 'em unawares like. It might inconvenience 'em, don't yer know. Maybe they wouldn't 'a 'ad the chimbley swep'."

"Move on," 'e says. "I know yer. Come, move on."

The perleeceman were quite right in one thing—it were quite true 'e knowed me, for 'e'd run me in many a time. So I couldn't be offended at 'is winnin' ways. I stepped from the wall across the slippery pavement, an' I didn't know, till I come to move, 'ow cold an' numbed I was. But as I stepped into the road I must 'astumbled. I remember the blaze of two bright lights, a loud cry, the swerve of a pair of frightened 'orses, an' the 'orrid pain of a 'eavy wheel on my body; an' then the lighted 'ouses an' churches an' theaytres, an' the gay crowds of people, an' the fallin' snow an' the bitter cold, my 'unger an' thirst, an' the kind perleeceman, all faded away.

When I opened my eyes again I was in a 'orspital. A clean white pillow was under my 'ead, an' clean white sheets

covered my wounded limbs, an' I was lyin' on somethink so soft an' easy that I thought at fust the doctors must 'atook out all my bones in some operations ; an', as I was always a bony chap, I began thinkin' as I did ought to be allowed the price o' them bones.

I just opened my eyes, an' looked once down the long room, an' see a whole line o' little white beds, all like mine—some with curtains drawn round 'em.

I closed my eyes again, an' sorter dozed off. Presently I 'eard a voice—a woman's voice—oh ! sich a low, an' sweet, an' soft, an' gentle voice—talkin' to the poor chap in the bed next to mine, an' readin' to 'im out of a Book. An' what she read was all about a Woman an' a Child. I'd 'eard somethink about it before, but I never took it in till I 'eard about it then, lyin' weak an' 'elpless. I couldn't understand it all, not bein' a schollard, but only Jack Scraggs, the gaol-bird ; but I could make out enough of it to 'ang on by. Before she finished I knowed who the Woman was, an' I knowed who was the Child. When she stopped speakin' I 'eld out my 'and an' beckoned 'er to come to me. An' when she come an' sat down by my bedside, I says, "Tell it to *me*." An' she went over all the story again, talkin' so simple an' easy I could make out almost all she said. When she rose to go away, evernin' 'ad come, for I see through the top of the winder a great star shinin' ; an' I wondered whether 't was like the star that was a-shinin' long ago above the Woman an' the Child.

Every day she used to come an' talk to me, an' she told me more an' more every time; till I used to watch for 'er as anxious as the perleece used to watch for me sometimes.

Everybody was wery kind to me in the 'orspital—the doctors, an' the nurses, an' the kind lady what used to come to read to us.

The mornin' I was discharged two doctors come an' pulled me about a bit; an' one of 'em said I were all right now, exceptin' that 'e rather suspected hincipient valvular haggglomerations in my 'eart. I were told afterwards as 'e must 'a meant some complaint, but I didn't know it at the time, and I felt 'urt like. I didn't know what 'e meant, but it sounded bad.

“Mister,” I says, “you’re wrong. Don’t go suspectin me of sich a thing as that. I know,” I says, “as my 'eart is full of all manner o’ bad feelin’s an’ wickedness; but I ain’t got no hincipient thingummy—indeed I ain’t, sir. Far from it,” I says. “I’m a-goin’ for to try to lead a honest life. I’m a-goin for to try to turn over a noo leaf, please God—blowed if I ain’t!”

Some'ow I don't mind talkin' about myself, an' a-tellin' all manner o' things about myself; but when it comes to speakin' about little Charlie, I feels took aback like. There comes a ugly sort o' lump into my throat, an' my voice gets sorter 'usky, an' I can't see quite clear through my eyes. I think, maybe, it's that hincipient what's-'is-name comin' on. Yer see I never 'ad nobody for to love, nor nobody for to love me, exceptin' little Charlie. I never 'ad no father an' no mother worth speakin' about; I never 'ad no little brother or sister to look after. I never 'ad nobody to care for, nor nobody to care for me, like Charlie—little Charlie—the poor little tired urchin I found forsook in the Park. I can't tell about it properly, but all my life, so rough an' so wicked as it 'ad always been, seemed to grow into my poor, wee, lovin' Charlie.

It was in the Park I found 'im, soon after I was discharged from the 'orspital. I 'ad been tryin' 'ard to live honest, but it were 'arder work than the treadmill. One dark night, after I'd being tryin' to get a job for a night's lodgin' without earnin' a copper, an' after bein' turned away from the Work-'Ouse becos' they was a-doin' of sich a roarin' trade they was like the homberlebussees in wet weather—"full inside," I got into the Park, an' made for one of the benches. There was scarcely any moon or stars that night—only a dim gaslight 'ere an' there among the trees. In the reg'ler season for sleepin' in the Park I 'ad a favourite pertickler bench which I always patterernized, an' though it was too bitter cold for to be the reg'ler season now—

from it—I made straight for my usual seat. When I gets up to it, I finds somebody a-lyin' on it already, an' in my most specialist an' most perticklerest corner.

I  
  uat were too dark to see clear, but I could make out right enough that somebody was there, an' I didn't like it.

“Mate,” I says, speakin' wery calm an' perlite to the bundle in the corner—“Mate,” I says, “escuse me, but that 'ere corner where you are a-snoozin' is my own special an' pertickler corner, what I'as reg'ler. If yer doubts my word,” I says, “ask any lady or gen'l'man as is in the 'abit o' sleepin' 'ere. I'm well bekknown to 'em all,” i says; “an' if yer want any other references, there ai'nt a perleeceman in this 'ere metrolopus as don't know me.”

The bundle did'nt make no answer.

“Escuse me, mate,” I says again, “but there ain't no other gen'l'man as uses this Park as wouldn't reckernise my right to that 'ere corner, an' be'ave as sich. I knows a good deal about the lawrs of this country,” I continners, “for no man 'as broke more of 'em than me; an' my opinion is as the lawr itself would give me the persession of that corner, in *consideration* of length of tenner. 'Ave yer,” I says, “any objection, religious or otherwise, to go to some other bench, or at least for to move into the other corner? We'll share the



clothes," I says, sarcastical, "between us, an' sleep together; an' I only 'opes as yer won't want to get out of bed to say yer prayers, and that yer don't kick."

Still I did'nt get no answer, an' I steps quietly up to the silent bundle an' turned aside the ragged old shawl that 'id whatever was underneath. Just at the moment some o' the dark clouds partly cleared away, an' the moon shone out, an' by its faint, glimmerin' light I see that the shawl was coverin'—not a great, coarse, rough chap like me, but a little child. A little child of, maybe, seven or eight years old, with white, starved flesh, an' thin, worn, wee 'ands. Fallin' 'alf over 'is pale, pinched face was curls of sich beautiful hair as I had never seen before—hair that looked as though it 'ad been all dipped in gold, or been kissed some summer's evermin' by the settin' sun. One 'and was lyin' on 'is breast, like as though 'e 'ad put it there for warmth, an' in it was nestlin' a little yellor canary bird. As I looked down upon this 'elpless young 'un in my corner, with the bird 'eld so close to 'im, tears come into my eyes for the fust time I could remember. I thought of the tale about the Child I 'ad 'eard in the 'orspital, an' I wondered whether the Child what was on earth no more knowed about this little 'un sleepin' that bitter winter's night on a bench in the cold Park.

Just as I was thinkin' that, the little 'un opened 'is eyes—big, timid eyes—an' see me bendin' over 'im—a rough, dirty

fellow—a gaol-bird. But 'e didn't shrink from me—e' didn't cry, or 'ide 'isself from me. No; but 'e stretched out 'is little arm, and 'is poor little 'and slipped into my bony fingers. Oh, often an' often I feel it there, white an' cold, an' so small an' tender, laid in my wicked 'and.

'Then 'is little lips opened an' 'e says, "I'm Charlie. Who are you?"

"My name's Jack, little un," I says, wery 'usky.

"Haven't you got any home, Jack?"

"No," I says, "I ain't got no home, Charlie."

"Then you're like me," says Charlie. "I haven't got any home either. Mother died—oh, such a long time ago it seems—an' father's gone away now. So I came into the Park to sleep, because I don't like to sleep with the others under the arches. So I came here—I and the little bird, Jack—the bird that used to sing to mother. Father used to say he'd kill it, but, oh! I'm so glad he never did, because there's nobody to love me now but the little bird that mother loved, Jack. You won't hurt us, Jack, will you?" An' 'e raised my 'and to 'is little lips, and kissed it. Then, like as though there'd been a river there dammed up all my life,

my 'eart overflowed ; an' I threw off my coat, an' wrapped it round little Charlie. An' soon, in my arms, 'e fell asleep ; an' when the mornin' broke I carried 'im out 'o the Park. Not to a Work-'Ouse or a hunsectarian Board School, but to a little bit of a room, where they took us in—me, an' my boy, an' 'is little bird.

That's 'ow me an' Charlie begun to live together. I tried wery, wery 'ard to get a livin', turnin' my 'and to anythink that come in my way. But times was bad, an' often, as I went back to Charlie without no money in my pocket, I thought of goin' back to my old life ; but I know'd if I did I might get parted from the little fellow what loved me so dear, an' what would 'a become of 'im without me ?

When the summer come, we done a little bit better. Sometimes me an' Charlie used to get out into the country a bit, an' used to see the green fields, an' the flowers, an' the great trees, with the blue sky over all. An' always Charlie brought the little bird with 'im. We'd bought a little cage ; an' before we went back we always put in some cool, sweet, green grass, an' then Dicky would sing all the sweeter an' louder, an' 'op about so pleased, with 'is eyes so bright an' beamin' that Charlie used to clap 'is 'ands for joy. I often think o' them walks in the country, an' of all Charlie used to say, an' 'ow 'e used to love to run among the flowers. But when the days grew shorter again, an' all the flowers was dyin' an' the leaves fadin', everythink went bad again.

God knows I tried 'ard—I tried my 'ardest—but every man's and seemed against me, an' I got poorer an' poorer, an' work scarcer an' scarcer, till at last, as the winter set in once more, we was starvin'. We could scarcely even give a crumb to the poor little bird in 'is cage. An' then Charlie was took ill—ill becos I couldn't give 'im food, an' drink, an' warm clothes. 'E'd been tryin' to sell matches in the streets for a bit, but at last 'e 'ad to give that up, for 'e was too sick to move. 'E used to lie so pale 'an thin in 'is rough bed, while 'is bird 'opped about the pillow an' sang to 'im.

I want to tell all the rest quickly, for 'tis 'ard to tell.

It all 'appened becos of one thing—we was starvin'.

Oh ! I wish I could put it into all the bells that will be a-ringin' again this Christmas. I wish I could put it into all the sermons as will be preached again this Christmas. We was starvin'—like so many others are now.

I'd been out all day, an' brought back nothink. Charlie was lyin' in 'is bit of a bed—the last time I ever see 'im again but one—the last time but one that ever I see 'is dear little pale face, or put my 'and on the curls that was all so soft an' golden. There was no fire in the room, an' one wee white 'and was pressed inside 'is ragged shirt for warmth, an' the little bird nestled in it—just like when I found 'em in the Park.

I closed the door, crep' down the stairs, an' out into the lighted streets, full o' people 'urryin' along to their comfortable 'omes, to their warm fires, an' groanin' tables.

An' that night I went back on the good resolves I'd made, for I stole. But 'twas only food I stole—only food—food for poor starvin' little Charlie, as was lyin' sick in that lonely garret, with 'is little bird pressed to 'is dyin' 'eart.

I stole. But 'twas only food—only food for little Charlie

The touch of the perleeceman's 'and was on my shoulder again that night—the old touch ; an' 'e says, with a smile, “Up to the old game again, Jack, eh? Thought we should 'ave yer again before long. I know yer. Come along. Yer know the way.”

Once more I stood before the beak, an' for once in my life I asked for mercy.

“I did it, sir. I took it. But 'twas not for me ; 'twas for my little dyin' Charlie. I left 'im starvin', sir, an' 'e loves me, an' I never 'ad nobody else for to love me but Charlie. The world's so full o' plenty, it can't be right that 'e should die o' want. There's somethink all wrong, sir. Let me go,

sir—let me go back to 'im. Some people 'as all they want, an' I've only got little Charlie. 'E's sich a little feller, an' 'e's so thin, an' pale, an' weak ; an' 'e loves me, an' 'is 'air's all soft an' golden. I can't 'elp it, sir—escuse me—I've got a hincipient somethink in my 'eart, an' it's a-comin' on."

An' I put my face in my tremblin' 'ands, an' cried.

Then the Beak says, "Six weeks."

Caged again !



Again 'twas the day before Christmas as I was let out of gaol. Again there was slush, an' snow, an' piercin' wind, an' bitter cold. Again the warm 'ouses, an' gay theaytres, an' lighted churches as I trudged along to the garret where I'd left Charlie six weeks before.

'E'd gone ! Got up an' went away with 'is matches and 'is bird soon after I 'ad been took away from 'im.

Out of the 'ouse I came, an' on, an' on, an' on I walked, searchin' for my poor lost Charlie.

Under the arches where the black, dark river flowed, in the streets, at the stations—everywhere I searched for 'im, ' nowhere I found 'im.

At last somethink came over me—I don't know what—to go to the Park—to the place where I fust see 'im, that night what seemed so long ago.

Into the Park I got, an' straight on to the old seat I went.

An' there, crouched on the bench, I found 'im at last ; an' uggd to 'is poor, cold bosom was the cage with 'is little bird.

The snow 'ad been fallin' thick on 'im—thick on 'is shiverin' body, thick on 'is starved face, thick on 'is beautiful 'air. Thick it lay now even on 'is little 'ands an' the tired, worn, weary feet what was never to run about the streets no more.

“Charlie ! Charlie ! Charlie !”

Open at last came the big, blue, timid eyes, an' again I 'eard 'is voice, but so faint an' weak.

“Jack !—I—was a-comin'—to meet you—at the prison gates. They told me—where—you was caged,—and I walked across—the Park,—an' I rested 'ere, becos—I—got tired,

an'—so weak—an' I think I fell asleep. Jack—Jack—do you hear the bells—the Christmas bells?

“Yes, Charlie ; 'tis Christmas morning.”

“Jack, tell me—once more—the tale you 'eard—in the 'orspital—about the Woman an'—the Child.”

An' I told 'im.

The little 'ands on the cage loosed their clutch, an' down it fell. As it fell, the door come open, an' up, up, through the snow went Charlie's bird.

An' up through the snow—free at last—went the soul of little Charlie—up to the Child Jesus.

Down on my knees I fell ; an' one 'and I raised towards the little flyin' bird, an' one 'and I laid on Charlie's white brow.

An' I cried, “ Flown—by God ! ”







## ALL ALONG THE LINE!

A BALLAD OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR.

---



THE Sabbath bells were chiming in our dear homes  
far away,  
As o'er the list'ning field rang out the summons  
for the fray :

Oh, brightly in the morning sun our spangled banners  
gleam'd,

And fearless every warrior's eye with dauntless courage  
beam'd ;

For tho' the foe in strong array had mustered for the  
fight,

We knew we fought in Freedom's cause—for Freedom and  
the Right—

And Glory follows close where'er the Flag of Freedom  
goes—

As moved our Van of Battle on loud cheer on cheer  
arose

All along the Line.

Hard by a ridge of rising ground we Georgians had to  
stay,  
The ground to hold till orders came—'twas ours but to  
obey—  
But as the battle's tide swept on, and regiments hurried  
past,  
As thro' the drifting smoke we saw our comrades falling  
fast,  
And heard their piercing death-shrieks rise above the con-  
flict's din,  
Hard work our leader had to hold the Boys of Georgia  
in.  
In strong, extended rank we stood that rising ridge to  
keep,  
But burned our hearts so fiercely that rose murmurs loud  
and deep

All along the Line.

At last, O God ! we see our men are falling, falling  
back,  
The Southern hosts are stealing on, our guns are firing  
slack !  
But now across the reeking field a mounted soldier  
rides,  
His panting charger wild with fear, a red stream down his  
sides.

With eager, throbbing, burning hearts, our eager eyes we  
    strain,  
As on, still on, the rider comes across the bloody  
    plain.  
" 'Tis Colonel Gray ! " is shouted, " from the Staff our orders  
    brings—  
Our orders come at last—Hurrah ! " and joyous shouting  
    rings

All along the Line.

We know him well, and love him well, this brave young  
    Colonel Gray,  
The Boys of Georgia he has lead on many a well-fought  
    day.  
On, on he comes until we see his face is ghastly  
    white—  
His steed is close upon us now ; why checks he not his  
    flight ?  
The charger halts, and at our feet, fast streaming life's red  
    tide,  
The Colonel falls, a lifeless corpse, with one white hand  
    stretched wide.  
A paper, see ! that dead hand clasps, with these words,  
    written large—  
" The General bids you ride and tell the Boys of Georgia  
    Charge

All along the Line ! "

The words were read ; one look upon the dead man's face  
we gave—  
Then " Charge ! " our leader shouted, and a glittering long  
white wave  
Ran down the rising ridge which we throughout the day  
had kept,  
As forward, forward, on, on, on, we Boys of Georgia  
swept ;  
To roll the tide of battle back, to win the half-lost  
field—  
To win it yet, or every man resolved dear life to  
yield.  
It seem'd as though that dead white face our fearful on-  
slaught led,  
And soon our bright steel's rolling wave bore crest of bloody  
red,

All along the Line.

And as we charged our troops reformed, and joined on  
every hand—  
Our charge was like the whirlwind that sweeps Death across  
the land ;  
And ere upon the western heights the sunset glow was  
seen,  
The Stars and Stripes waved proudly where the rebel camp  
had been !

When we death's roll have answer'd, and our children's sons  
are old,  
The gallant deeds of North and South that day will still be  
told,  
For long 'twill be before the fame of such brave deeds shall  
fade—  
But, chief of all, I think they'll tell the charge we Georgians  
made,

All along the Line.

\* \* \* \*

Next eve, when peaceful starbeams gleam'd the field of  
battle o'er,  
The corse of gallant Colonel Gray with tender hands we  
bore :  
A soldier's hasty sepulchre some sad-faced warriors  
made—  
Where friend and foe together lie our valiant dead we  
laid.  
No costly monument we rear'd to mark his place of rest,  
But just these words we wrote upon the slab above his  
breast :  
“ He, being dead, yet speaketh ”—and our meaning well  
they know  
Who hear how by a dead man's word we charged against the  
foe

All along the Line.

My brothers who are fighting for the Right against the  
Wrong,  
My brothers in the battle for the Weak against the  
Strong,  
My brothers who are fighting for the Rights God gave to  
all,  
When those who give our orders, in the raging struggle  
fall,  
No dimmer in our stricken hearts must glow Faith's sacred  
flame—  
The foe is still before us, and the Cause remains the  
same.  
In death our leaders speak to us as plainly as in  
life—  
“Charge, comrades, Charge ! close up your ranks, and carry  
on the strife

All along the Line !”





## “ALL FOR HER.”\*

### A SAILOR'S STORY.

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HIS here is a little bit of a love story, and I want for to tell it just straight away and straight-forrud, without no tacking or beating about.

Bring this here gen'tl'man the rum and 'ot water. All right, sir, all right. Let 'em bring it now; I'll drink the rum, and you can have the 'ot water.

Love's a very peculiar sort of thing, sir. In my opinion, there ain't nothing as throws a man on 'is beam ends—nothing as blows out 'is riggin' and shifts 'is ballast—like bein' in love. Now in every love story as I ever 'eard, there's always a womon mixed up. Gen'rally speakin', it's a young woman, and unearthly beautiful and unearthly good, till about ten days after the weddin'. It's a very strange

\* Letts' Illustrated Household Magazine, January, 1884.

thing, but there's nothing changes a woman's looks and her general sailin' like the weddin' ceremony. Ask any married man you know. As usual, there's a young woman mixed up in this yarn I'm a-goin' for to spin. I'd better start from the first beginnin' of it, all fair and shipshape.

At the time I'm a-goin' to talk about, I was mate of the poor old *Ocean Belle*, who went to pieces on a coral reef in the Pacific. I landed in London after a good long cruise, with my heart full of spirits and my pockets full of money. I stayed long enough to get rid of some of the money ; and then, as it was nigh on to Christmas-time, and havin' nobody else to pay a visit to, I decided to run up to Whitby to spend Christmas with an old uncle and aunt I'd got livin' there.

Accordin', I fetched Whitby one cold, dark night after a 'eavy passage. The old folks was partickler glad to see me, and got up a party a few days before Christmas for to celebrate my visit.

This party was where it all begun. As soon as I tacked into the room where the company was anchored, I see a pretty little brown-eyed, brown-haired lass sittin' very quiet and thoughtful near the fire ; and near her, eyein' her in a way as I didn't like the look of, was a young linendraper chap with long hair and the name of Faggles, as served in a



shop in the town. The little brown-eyed lass I never see before ; but I knowed Faggles, as were a lubber who put worses into the town paper fit to sink a whole fleet with fright.

“Ben,” says my old aunt, takin’ ’old of the lass’s hand “This is Rosie Deane—my wild young nephew, Ben Quarters.”

Seein’ as that poetical lubber’s eyes was on me, I draws my left foot back, and makes a bow as perlite as a dancin’ master, and then I takes a chair between Rosie and Faggles as we slewed up to the table ; and I tries to look easy, though red.

“You have just returned from sea, Mr. Quarters?” says Rosie—and I shall never forget ’ow sweet and soft and gentle her voice was.

“Yes,” I says, bashful, and then I turns round to Faggles, and says, “Any new pomes out lately?”

“No,” says the linendraper, “not lately. My last hode,” he says with a mournful smile, “’as been too much for me.” And he stretches out ’is hand for another crumpet.

“I think, mate,” I says friendly, for I knowed I didn’t ought to have no grudge agin ’im, “I think you eat too much. That’s what it is. Leastways, I’ve always ’eard as

food was a very bad thing for gen'tl'men afflicted your way."

I didn't mean no offence, but the observation were took amiss, and I thought there'd ha' been a bit of a squall; and as for Rosie Deane, I thought she'd ha' died thro' tryin' to stop laughing. But it blowed over by her a-askin' of me to tell about my voyage.

I was too nervous like to say much then, but later on in the evenin' I got more at home with her; and she listened, with her sweet brown eyes glistenin' and wonderin', and her bonnie face lit up with light, while I told her about the great wonderful sea, and all the strange lands and strange people I'd seen.

Her shy brown eyes was raised to mine, and her little hand rested in mine a moment, as we said good-bye that night. And many and many a time since then I've seen them dear brown eyes as they looked into mine that night; in drivin' wind and blindin' snow—in the black, black night, with the good ship groanin' in the heaving waves, I've seen them. I've seen them when the mornin' sun has broke thro' the clouds, and sunk to rest at night. I've seen them when stars have been shinin' as they never shine 'ere—I've seen them, brighter to me than any light which ever shone on land or sea. And I've felt the restin' of that little hand in mine—

them little white fingers in my strong and 'orny grasp, in many a peril, in many a deadly danger, since that time when I first said to her "good-bye, good-night!"

The next mornin', as I was a-beating about like, I found myself drifted close to the farm-'ouse where Rosie's father and mother lived. Her father come out, and the end of it was I found myself settlin' down inside, smokin' a pipe with 'im. The next day was the same, and the next. The wind always blew towards Dingle Farm. Old Deane was a nice sort of feller, though 'asty and very 'ot-tempered.

Now I found during these 'ere visits that Rosie was very fond of music ; and accordin', I sailed on to a splendid idea. I'd read in a good many love tales about different lubbers serenadin' their young women, and I made up my mind as when Christmas Eve came round, I'd make a quiet run out to Dingle Farm, and do a reg'lar ship-shape proper serenade under Rosie's berth—leastways window. The difficulty was, I know'ed I'd never played anything but the Jew's-harp and the drum, and somehow they didn't seem quite the things for to run a serenade with ; though the Jew's harp is pleasin', and the drum cert'nly is a rousin' instrument. I thought I might just squeeze through with a concertina, but I knowed I could only play "Yankee Doodle, diddle-dum-da," and was very shaky on the top notes.

These reflections took me aback for a bit, but I soon got under weigh with a good notion. I went to a music shop to see what they could do for me, and I come across a small barril-horgan, easy enough to carry. "The very thing!" I says to myself.

"Mate," says I to the shopman, "does this play sekerler or sacred toones?"

"Both, sir," he says. "The fact is, it belonged to a strange old gen'tl'man 'ere, who 'ad it made for 'im. It got a bit out of order, and he brought it 'ere in a pet, and told us to sell it. You've only to handle it this way," he says, fumbling about the stops, "and the toones soon get in proper order. 'Ere it goes, just when I set it off."

Sure enough out busts the barril-horgan, playin' beautiful, "'Ark! the 'Erild Hangels sing."

When I 'eard that, "Name your price!" I 'ollers, for a more lovely toone to go a-serenadin' with on a Christmas Eve I felt I couldn't have.

The next night was Christmas Eve. I was very nervous all day long; but when the night come, off I started with the barril-horgan for Dingle Farm.

It was very dark, and I lost my bearings once or twice, but about eleven o'clock I brought up near the farm. I went along very quiet, with the barril-horgan under my arm, till I got about a quarter of a knot from the 'ouse.

All of a sudden, I 'eard some lubber walkin' be-'ind me. I didn't take no notice, nor I didn't 'ail 'im. But he seemed to foller close in my wake, and when I ported my hel'm and turned into the lane leadin' up to the 'ouse, he ported 'is hel'm almost at the same time, and ran 'is 'ead down the lane. Then I broached to and lay by close in to the hedge.

It was Faggles the poet, with a trumpet big enough to float a ship in.

"Faggles!" I says.

"Quarters!" says he.

"Faggles!" I 'ollers.

"Quarters!" shouts he.

"Yes," I makes answer and says, "Quarters it is."

"Yes," he says, "Faggles it is."

"With a Jericho trumpet?" says I.

"With a cornet-ar-piston," he replies lofty. "Quarters, with a beer-barrel under 'is arm?"

"With a little barril-horgan," I says, 'aughty.

I knowed what he'd come for, and I knowed he knowed what I'd come for. We was both runnin' in the serenadin' line.

"I thought matters would come to a krikis between us before long," says Faggles.

"And now it's come," I says. "And a neat little thing in the way of krikisses it is. As neat a little krikis as ever I see. Come on," I says, puttin' down the barril horgan and taking off my coat. "Come on," I says, "and I'll give you a krikis on t'ae nose. Come on!"

But Faggles 'ad got under weigh, all canvas spread, and by the time I bore down on 'im, we was close under the windows of Dingle Farm.

All was very quiet and still and dark. I takes up a position near the water-butt, and Faggles stands close to the wall, the other side of the window.

I fixes my little barril-horgan, and Faggles raises 'is trumpet to 'is mouth.

"Faggles," I says, "will you go away?"

"No," he says, "I'm *blowed* if I do!"

"Then Faggles," says I, "we'll each take a hinderpendent course till later on; only," I says, solemn, "only, Faggles, remember this—your blood, Faggles, be on your own 'ead!"

I touches the spring for "'Ark! the 'Erild Hangels sing." Out busts that plaguey horgan, rattlin' and roarin' and crashin', "We won't go home till mornin'!" at the very instant that a awful blast come from Faggles' trumpet, a-playin' "Come where my love lies sleepin'!" in a minor key.

The result was awful. Four dogs flew at us, barkin' like mad—other dogs took up the alarm—Faggles kep' on a-blowin'—the horgan went on with "We won't go home till mornin'!"—I was swearin' and 'ollerin' at the dogs—Bedlam seemed to be let loose—and in the middle of it all old Deane threw up the window, and looked out, with a gun in 'is hand; Mrs. Deane standin' at 'is elbow.

"My dear," he says, "fire I will. It's no use to tell me it's cats. I know cats don't go home till mornin,' but they don't play barril-horgans about it, and their loves don't lie sleepin'." And up went the gun to 'is shoulder.

Life is sweet. I made one plunge for the water-butt, and in I jumped. Faggles dashed 'is trumpet to the ground, and got into a dog's-kennel.

"Speak at once," 'ollers the old man, "whoever you are, or I'll fire !"

"Mr. Deane," 'ollers Faggles from the kennel, "it isn't me. It's the sea-farin' gen'tl'man in the water-butt."

"Water-butt ?" says old Deane.

"Yes, sir," I says, gettin' out. "Bring me a spade, sir, so's I can bury this infernal horgan, for I can't stop it—and then I'll explain everything."

Down come the farmer, and in went me and Faggles, exceptin' what the dogs 'ad bit out of us, leavin' the horgan still a-playin'. Things was explained as well as they could be, and all was forgiven on the condition that nothing of the sort should ever occur again, and that me and Faggles should shake hands.



As we walked back together that night, Faggles says, "I shan't go no more where my love lies sleepin', unless I know the dogs is not only sleepin' too, but chained up."

And says I, very mournful, "Faggles, no more of the 'Erild Hangels for me. There's too much of the water-but about 'em."

\* \* \* \* \*

The next mornin'—Christmas mornin'—I see Rosie at church, and spoke to her comin' out. I see her in church, kneelin' and prayin' all peaceful and calm, with the light from the painted window fallin' softly on her glossy 'ead and folded hands.

I 'eard her dear sweet voice joinin' in hymn and litany. I spoke to her comin' out, and 'eld her hand in mine again as I wished her a Merry Christmas. And I longed to throw my arms around her, and draw her close, close to the rough 'eart that loved her so dear.

That night—that Christmas night—I told her 'ow dear she was to me. I'd spent the evenin' at Dingle Farm, and she'd come to the door to see me off. The moon and stars was shinin' very bright and very peaceful over all the sleepin' woods and fields and hills.

I took in mine the little hand that would ha' been so mighty to guide my life ; and as simple and manly as I

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could I told her just the plain story of 'ow very dear I loved her, and I only asked her was there any hope ?

Oh, so pale grew my poor darling's face ! Oh, so piteously her hand trembled—trembled like a shiverin' ship—as she tried to withdraw it from my grasp.

“ Oh, no, no—I'm so sorry—I'm so sorry ! ”

I kep' back all the feelin's that rose like a mighty flood in my 'eart—and I only asked her, “ my dear, there is someone else you love ? ”

And low and soft she whispered “ Yes.”

“ Rosie ? ”

“ Yes ? ”

“ It . . . it . . . it isn't the g'ntl'man what blowed the trumpet last night, is it ? ”

“ Oh, no, no, no ! ”

And then, with the moonlight fallin' sweetly, and brightly, and softly on her dear brown curls, she laid her little 'ead on the rough sleeve of my coat, and cried as though her 'eart

would break. I laid my 'ard, strong hand on her little, bowed, troubled 'ead ; and for the first time for many a long year I found a prayer a-goin' up from my 'eart—that I might be able to 'elp my darling in her sorrow, for nothing now could be half so sweet to me as to do that.

“Rosie,” I says, 'usky, but very firm, “I’m only a rough sailor, and I’ve knowed all along as I could never be worthy to join company along of you. I’m only a rough sort of a fellow, but I’ll do my duty—I’ll stand by to 'elp you, my dear, whilst I’ve got a rag flying. I love you so dear that I want you to trust me, and let me try to 'elp you. I ain’t got no other thought in my 'eart now, but to 'elp you, God knows. And if there’s aught wrong between you, and . . . and . . . and the man you loves, I’ll try to 'elp you, Rosie, if you let me. I will, my dear . . . because I do love you so very tender and true, that . . . I . . . only want to see you happy.”

And by and by she told me 'ow she'd sent away from her a man who loved her—sent 'im away long ago because she thought she didn't care for 'im, and 'ow when he'd gone away, no one knew where, somewhere across the blue waters, she found, too late, that all her 'eart 'ad turned to 'im, all her 'eart was 'is, all her 'eart was pain within her till he could come to claim it, and bring into it the sunshine of 'is love again.

This was my poor girl's secret, and no brother and no sister 'ad she to share it with. And like as a brother might ha' done, I raised her hand to my lips and kissed it—kissed it, only once in all my life—kissed it slow and lovin' and gentle, as I said to myself, "I will find 'im if I roam the wide world over."

And before I left her—never to see her again, never, never to see her no more—the name of the man she loved, and every line of 'is face—for she carried 'is portrait in her breast—was written in my broken 'eart.

\* \* \* \* \*

I found 'im at last. Far away from home, far away from the girl who loved 'im, I found 'im.

And he come back to her, back across the waters, back to the light of Rosie's bonny brown eyes, back to the sweetness of her lips, back to the joy of callin' her wife, and her children sons and daughters, back to the tender arms and gentle 'eart of the girl who loved 'im.

He was lyin' sick, and weak, and 'elpless in a gold-digger's tent out in Australia. As I see 'im for the first time, and bent over the rough bed on which he was lyin', 'is mind was

wandering far away. He was mutterin' the name what was so dear to both of us, 'oldin' out longin' hands for her in 'is fever and pain and loneliness. I watched by 'im day and night, and always he called her name, always he 'eld out 'is thin, worn hands in longin' to draw her to 'im. Of the English fields and lanes and trees and flowers he used to talk sometimes—but only as though she was walkin' with 'im there. Of the moonlight upon the gleamin' waters and white beach near Rosie's home—but only as though she was standin' by 'is side. Of the old dim church, the church where I saw her kneelin' that Christmas mornin', with its painted windows and old carved pews—but always as though she was kneelin' by 'is side. Of the gabled farm 'ouse, where me and poor Faggles went serenadin', but only as though she was waitin' for 'im there.

At last there come a night when he could hear and understand.

And I told 'im all.

For hours and hours we sat, for always when I left off he cried, "She loves me—she loves me—tell me again and again that she loves me!"

I couldn't 'elp it—I couldn't 'elp 'im knowin' as I loved her too, so dear, and so deathless, and 'ow I'd been searchin'

for 'im for to send 'im back to her, so's she could be happy. And the names he called me is unfit for publication.

The sudden Australian sunrise broke in upon us—and I remembered it was the sunrise of another Christmas Day.

“Mate,” I says, “it’s Christmas mornin’—God bless yer ! It’s Christmas mornin’, and soon it’ll be Christmas in dear old England ; and the bells will be ringin’ out, and the people will be gatherin’ in church. And she’ll be there, and she’ll be prayin’ for you, mate, and maybe she’ll even be puttin’ in a word for me. Prayers ain’t in my line,” I says, “far from it ; but give us yer hand, mate , *let’s think of a bit of a prayer for Rosie !*”

After that I got thinkin’ some’ow about ’Erild Hangels, and I could’nt ’elp wonderin’ whether that unfort’nate barril-horgan ’ad stopped yet.





## A WOMAN AND A CHILD.

### AN UNORTHODOX CHRISTMAS STORY.

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HE streets of the city were gay with light,  
And windows gleam'd ruddy with hearth-fires'  
glow ;  
The joy-bells rang out on the gath'ring night,  
And silently, swiftly came down the snow.  
It cover'd the ground with a dazzling sheet,  
As yet by no stain of the earth defiled—  
Pass'd wearily, slowly, from street to street,  
A woman and a child.

Still linger'd around her a nameless grace,  
Tho' scant was her dress, and her feet were bare  
But pitiful pale was the mother's face,  
And full her sad eyes of a dumb despair.  
O, merciful God !—it is hard to say—  
But they starved while thousands held riot wild—  
Aye, starved on the vigil of Christmas Day—  
This woman and her child.

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The door of a church stood ajar hard by,  
A flood of light falling athwart the street ;  
Within they were festival holding high,  
And notes of glad music rose clear and sweet.  
The wand'rer crept near : rang sweet voices out,  
Of " Peace on earth " singing, and " Mercy mild "—  
And heard she the minister read about  
A Woman and a Child.

How Christ, our dear Saviour, came down to men,  
And nestl'd His head on the Virgin's breast ;  
And all the old story he preach'd again,  
Of all the world's stories the sweetest, best.  
At last from the church, the grand service o'er,  
The richly clad worshippers slowly filed ;  
And passed, pleading vainly, outside the door,  
A woman and a child.

" O, Christ !" said the woman, with bitter cry,  
" It may be true about Mary and Thee ;  
But ' Christians,' now-a-days deem it a lie,  
Or could not leave starving my babe and me !"



Wore slowly the watches of night away,  
Till dawn of the Christmas, dull and wild :  
And, stretched cold and dead in the snow, there lay  
A woman and a child.





## WILLIAM BUGGINS.

### A COSTERMONGER'S CONTRIBUTION.

— —

**W**HICH I, Bill Buggins by name, were engaged to write summat for this 'ere Round Dozing, and which it do not matter 'ow I were got at for that purpose. But one thing, I says to the gentl'man wot give me the orfice, "Sir," I says, "wot I writes I writes; if it ain't grammar it ain't grammar, and if it ain't Hingerlish it ain't Hingerlish; I ain't a-goin' to study no grammar at my time o' life, nor I ain't a-goin' to study no spellin'. All I arks is to be perwided with a bottle of red hink, which do look so startling-like, yer know; ten quires o' bloo foolscap paper, twelve clay pipes, and a pen; also a trifle o' baccy in the form of four pounds of extry strong shag—and a cask o' beer standin' handy by the door—and I arks no more, but leave this literairy man to solitoode—likewise meditation." Then I sits down and thinks wot sort of a harticle I'd write. "Shall I write comic," I says, "like Bunyans; or shall I write solemn and serious, like—like the gentl'men wot work off them tracks? Po'try," I says, "I can't let myself down

to; I don't want the name o' Buggins 'awked about along o' yer Miltons and yer Shakespeares and yer Chaucerses; not me!"

So I begins serious, and thought as 'ow I'd do a harticle on polertics; so I sends round to the little 'ouse at the corner, don't yer know, to enquire if they'd lend a literary man a back number of the *Daily Noose*. They sends answer that back numbers of the *Daily Noose* was a 'a'pney, or four for three 'a'pence. So I gets my four back numbers of the *Daily Noose*, and begins to read hup about the Franchiseses and the Lords. "Lor!" I says, wen I'd finished two leadin' harticles and the perlice noose, "wot a bloodthirsty, owdacious lot them Lords is, now, ain't they?" By the time I'd finished another leadin' harticle my blood was hup and my temper was ris, and I sent word to the gentl'man lodger upstairs—he belongs to the boot-cleanin' denomination—to know if he'd come and act Lords and the Demonstration with me; but when he know'd as 'ow he were to be the Lords and me the Demonstration, and knock 'im down, he said he 'ad a reason for supposin' as two pairs o' Wellingtons and a lace-up was a-waitin' for him near the Royal Exchange. This certingly was not patteriotic, and I'm afraid he must ha' bin readin' the wrong paper. Howsumdever, I reads another harticle, and gets so excited I felt I must do something, so I stands up and sings "Roole Britannia!" in wery low treble, which I find soots my woice best, warying it occasional by a little 'igh trebel, and bass, and—falsetter; till there come a boy from the

barber's shop next door, a-requestin' of me, verry polite and genteel, to 'old my row, as it so upset the barber he 'ad a'ready shaved all the 'air off the 'ead of a unfort'nit old deaf and dumb gentl'man, and then scalped 'im like a red Ingin by applyin' the 'air-brushed-by-machinery apparatus to 'im. So I takes up my pen to write a leadin' harticle on the 'Ouse of Lords. The "Hupper 'Ouse, !" I writes—and then I stops and surweys wot I'd rote. Nothink more come into my 'ed just then, so I writes "The Hupper 'Ouse, !" again. Then I frowns dreadful severe and thoughtful, and to keep up the flow I writes "The Hupper 'Ouse, !" again. I didn't feel equal to keeping up such a strain as this, so I stops again, and holds out wot I'd rote, and surweys it once more. It read verry well—quite *Daily Noosestical*—and I felt as my mother would ha' bin proud of her Willihum if she could on'y ha' seen 'im then. But it certingly didn't seem long enough like for a leading harticle, so I says, "I shall have to come down to po'try after all ; I shan't write no more about the Lords just now."

So I sends to the cercalatin' library for a book o' pomes, and they sends me a book of hodes and other uncommon queer pieces o' po'try about a party of coves wot always took their meals at a Round Table ; and Harthur and Larncelot, and a young female, called Helaine, and warious other coves and covesses. My heye caught a piece about Lady Clary Were der Were, and it so 'appened I'd bin supplyin' vegetables to a 'ouse were the lady's name were Were, and

I couldn't get my money, wich were thirteen and fourpence ; and tho' she were not the Lady Were, and I didn't know if 'er name were Clary, I thought I'd write a piece about 'er after the same style. "But 'ow about a pohetical license?" I says, but then I thought if so be as I were found a-writin' po'try without a License, the Govingment wouldn't be 'ard on a poor man. So at it I goes and works off as follers, all out of my own 'ead :—

Lady Clary Were der Were,  
 I've left pertatoes at your door ;  
 Likewise green peas and cabbages,  
 But I 'on't do so nary more :  
 And so I tells yer wery plain—  
 If I should meet you, Clary dear,  
 You'll find I ain't got that repose  
 Wot stamps the cast o' Were der Were !

Clary, Clary, Were der Were,  
 If you ain't money in your 'and,  
 Ain't there no other 'awkers wot  
 Instead o' me yer ought to land ?  
 Go, cheat your butchers if yer will ;  
 I don't care who you cheat or 'ow—  
 But Billy Buggins do expect  
 To get paid for all them vegetables wot he supplied to thou !

"This is Genihus," I says, as I wiped the prespiration from my brow ; "this is Genihus, but 'ot." Then I goes to

the gentl'man lodger upstairs an' showed 'im wot I'd rote in werse.

"Wot d'yer call it?" 'e says, suspicious like. "I'm a good cricket," 'e says.

"It's wot yer call a hode, don't yer know?" I says, "An' worth every farthing of two shillin's."

"Never hode yer nothink in my life," says 'e, 'uffy.

It was no use explaining to 'im, as were not a pote, so I shows 'im wot else I'd been writin'.

"Why don't yer write somethink agin the Lib'ral's too?" 'e asks.

"Never," I says. "At least, not under three shillin's, if its in werse. I don't sacrifice my principles in werse for no man under three shillin's. Nary a principle," I says proud, under three bob."

The cricket didn't make no remark, so after a bit I says, "I think I shall send that hode to the *Times*," says I. "But I shan't 'ave it perdooced under the name o' Buggins, or them interviewin' chaps will be crowdin' round my barrer."

" I shouldn't send it to the *Times*," says the cricket, as were certingly no pote.

" Where then ? " I arks.

" Why, if I was you," 'e says, as I leaves the room, " I should send it to the 'Ome for lost Dawgs ! "

But I didn't take no notice of his cricketkisms, as was jealousy, an' afore I'd done with them ten quires o' bloo foolscap I'd jerked another lovely pome, without no model nor nothink else. I never see nothink like it in my life, an the cricket says 'e 'opes 'e never will again. It were all along o' that there Franchise, an' I called the Hepick Pome as follers :—

*" If only we 'ad a Wote ! "*

The sort of men we are we'd show,  
 Brave an' free to the 'Ustin's go,  
*An' we wouldn't ha' been so long about the Nisero,*  
 If only we 'ad a Wote !

We'd give brave Roberts the Garter's star,  
 For his wonderful march on Candahar;  
*An' we'd smash the Griffin at Temple Bar,*  
 If only we 'ad a Wote !

We'd try to stop poor Egypt's tears,  
 We'd send fresh blood to the 'Ouse of Peers,  
*An' we'd do much more for the Volunteers,*  
 If only we 'ad a Wote !

We'd talk common sinse to Ould Oireland so green,  
An' tache her to love our good mother the Queen,  
*An' we'd naturaloize her whisky sheebecn,*  
If only we 'ad a Wote !

We'd lessen the starvin' outcasts' woes,  
We'd break the fat Aldermen's sweet repose,  
*An' we'd make the ballet wear longer clothes,*  
If only we 'ad a Wote !

We'd lower the fine for gittin' tight,  
The Signalmen shouldn't work day and night,  
*And we'd hunt down the traders in dynamite,*  
If only we 'ad a Wote !

We'd give the poor shop-girls a bit of a chair,  
We'd give up "Free" trade an' exchange it for "Fair,"  
*An' we'd bid the sweet Boers at the Cape have a care,*  
If only we 'ad a Wote !

Poor Valentine Baker we'd re-instate,  
We'd jolly soon lessen the School Board rate,  
*An' we wouldn't ha' made poor Gordon wait,*  
If only we 'ad a Wote !







## THE IDIOT LAD.

---



HE vesper hymn had died away,  
And the benison had been said,  
But one remained in church to pray,  
With a bow'd and reverent head.  
He could not frame in words the prayer  
Which reached the Throne of Grace,  
But the Love and Pity present there  
Saw the pleading of his face.

In many curls hung his hair of gold  
Round a brow of pearly white ;  
His face was cast in a graceful mould  
And his eyes were strangely bright.  
Gentle his white hand's touch—his smile  
Was tender and sweet and sad :  
Nought knew the heart of fraud and guile  
Of poor Dick, the idiot lad.

“ My boy,” I said, “ the tired sun  
Sinks low on the west sea’s breast ;  
The shades which fall when the day is done  
Woo the weary earth to rest.  
In the vesper zephyr’s gentle stir  
The sleepy tree-tops nod—  
Why wait you here ?” And he said, “ Oh, sir,  
I would see the Face of God !

“ If the sun is so fair in his noon-day pride,  
And the moon in the silver night ;  
If the stars which by angels at eventide  
Are lighted can shine so bright !  
If wood and dell, each flow’r and tree,  
And each grass of the graveyard sod,  
Are so full of beauty, oh, what must it be  
To look on the Face of God !

“ I have sought for the vision wide and near,  
And once, sir, I travell’d far,  
To a mighty city long leagues from here,  
Where men of the great world are.  
But the faces I saw were false and mean,  
And cruel, and hard, and bad ;  
And none like the Face the saints have seen  
Saw poor Dick, the idiot lad.

“In the night, sir, I wander away from home ;  
Down the lanes and the fields I go—  
Thro’ the silent and lonely woods I roam  
Patient, and praying, and slow.  
In the early morn on the hills I stand,  
Ere yet the mists have past ;  
And I eagerly look o’er sea and land  
For the wonderful Vision at last.

“When the lightnings flash and the thunders roar,  
And the ships fly in from the gale ;  
When the waves beat high on the shrinking shore,  
And the fishing boats dare not sail ;  
I seek It still, in the storm and snow,  
Lest it may happen to be,  
That then it will please the great God to show  
His beautiful Face to me.

“I seek It still when God’s gleaming pledge  
In the bright’ning sky appears,  
And from tree and flower, and sparkling hedge  
Earth is weeping her happy tears ;  
For I sometimes think that I may behold  
After yearning years of pain,  
The Face of my God in the quivering gold  
Of the sunshine that follows rain.

“ When the fishers return on the homeward tide,  
I ask them nothing but this :  
‘ Have you seen It out there on the ocean wide,  
Where the sky and the waters kiss ? ’  
But they smile, and ‘ Poor Dick ’ I hear them say,  
And they answer me always ‘ No ’—  
So I think It must be still farther away  
Than even the fishing boats go.”

\* \* \* \*

That night while the simple fisher-folk slept,  
From the dreams of the mighty free,  
Down to the beach the Idiot crept,  
And launched on the summer sea.  
And the boat sped on, and on, and on,  
From the ever-receding shore,  
And brighter and brighter the moonbeams shone,  
Which for him were to shine no more.

Far out at sea his boat was found,  
And the tide which bore to land  
The village fleet from the fishing ground  
Laid softly upon the sand  
The white wet face of the idiot boy—  
Not yearning and wistful now,  
For perfect peace, and rest, and joy  
Were written upon his brow.

In the poor lad's eyes seem'd still the glow  
Of a new and a wondrous light ;  
And down on the beach the women knelt low  
As they gaz'd on the holy sight.  
As the fishermen walk'd to the smiling dead,  
Softly their rough feet trod ;  
And bared was each head, as one slowly said  
" He has look'd on the Face of God ! "





## THE DREAM OF DIONYSIUS BOGGLES.

---

**F**OR weeks past it had been known in Slowville-cum-Ditch that a Missionary meeting was going to be held in the Dissenting Chapel; and great excitement had prevailed. Almost all the shops had displayed the Notice, with the exception of those of Mr. Tripe, the pork-butcher, and Mr. Onions, the greengrocer. But then the former was known to be a scoffer, and the latter was worse, for he officiated as the parish clerk in the "Established" church. And it was well-known in Slowville-cum-Ditch that the said church was fast going to the bad, for the new Rector had suppressed the rustic choir which had howled and scraped therein long "afore he come;" and he had further violated all the fundamental principles of Church-and-State by officiating in a white gown.

"As is Idolatry," said Peter Boggles, the linendraper, to Mrs. Bruce McScrew, the Scotch widow, who cleaned the Chapel—"as is Idolatry and rank Romanyism, as is

Superstition and Burnin's at the stake, an' well-known to 'ave shed the blood of Saints."

I do not know to what exact form of worship the Slowville-cum-Ditch conventicle was dedicated, but all the members were not only in a delightful condition of certainty as to their own spiritual security, but—more comfortable still!—were equally certain of the non-security of other people. Their religion was of that amiable form which consigns, with cheerful resignation, little children to eternal flames—the sort of religion which is all Selfishness and no Humanity—all Sermon and no Worship—the religion which contains a maximum of Damnation to a minimum of Christ.

When at length the night of the Missionary Meeting arrived, the little Chapel was thronged. Amongst the first to arrive was the Boggles party, consisting of Peter Boggles, Mrs. Boggles, Julia Ann Boggles, Selina Cerulea Boggles, Dionysius Boggles, little Tommy Boggles, and Eliza Jane, the daughter of Tim Alum, the baker. This young lady, o'er whose fair head (which was covered with red hair where it was not bald) some thirty-seven summers had flown, was the girl whose artless attractions had won the virgin affections of Dionysius Boggles.

Dionysius was a manly youth of turned seventeen, standing about five feet high, and measuring at least twenty inches round

the chest, in fact, quite an eligible recruit for the Grenadier Guards under our new Short-and-Small Service System. Besides the large experience of life he had acquired behind his father's counter, he was considered possessed of a great deal of "book learning." He was, also, a Rhyme-monger; in fact, the Village poet. This proud distinction was contested for a time by Onions, the parish clerk, whose "Noo version in Rhyme of the Lord's prayer" was considered a great improvement upon the original, but the great "epic poem" which Dionysius Boggles composed upon the Bursting of the Village pump washed Onions, so to speak, out of the field, and Dionysius reigned without a rival.

This little family party of the Boggleses filled the front pew, and the pews behind them soon began to fill also. Even Tripe, the scoffer, and Onions, the Idolater, were seen, standing near the door.

As the hour for the commencement of the meeting approached, the minister, the Reverend Rufus Flames, suggested that as one of the principal speakers had not yet arrived the audience should engage themselves in the singing of a hymn or two, and accordingly the harmonium struck up a favourite air. Now, this led to an unfortunate accident. The expected speaker having arrived, the Reverend Rufus Flames decided at once to enter the Chapel and ascend the platform. There were several ministers and live Missionaries



with Mr. Flames in the Vestry, and they all entered from the Vestry door into the Chapel in face of the audience single-file, the Reverend Rufus Flames leading, at the very moment when the whole audience burst lustily into a fresh verse, which opened—

“See the hosts of sin advancing,  
Satan leading on !”

This was undeniably awkward, but the effect wore off.

The speeches were long, eloquent, and energetic, and created much excitement. The Missionaries spoke about the bright, sunny, faraway lands of savage men and dusky maidens.

Dionysius Boggles was greatly moved.

“Oh, Eliza,” he said to Miss Alum, “Oh, Eliza Jane, *I* would go and seek those distant shores, and preach to those poor dusky girls !”

Miss Alum's eyes glowed with kindred enthusiasm, or something, as she answered—

“Oh no you won't, Dionysius !”

At a certain point in one of the most eloquent of the speeches, little Tommy Boggles set up a sudden crying and howling.

"See," exclaimed the speaker, "this dear little child—how touching it is to see one so young so deeply moved ! You are crying," he said, benevolently, bending over the platform towards Tommy, to Mr. Boggles's intense gratification, for of course all eyes went towards his pew, "you are crying because you are so sorry for these poor people I am telling you about, are you not, my child?"

"No, I isn't !" said Tommy.

"Why, then, are you weeping, my little man?" said the minister.

"'Cos me got the Tummy-ache !" howled Tommy.

This led to the wretched child's instant ejection by the indignant Boggles, whose face assumed the cheerful complexion of a danger signal on the railway-line.

When the plates were taken round, an incident occurred which afforded a striking proof of how deeply the poetic soul of Dionysius Boggles had been stirred, for when the

plate was passed down the Boggles pew a dreamy, far-off, poetic look was observed to steal over his poetic and rather quimply face. His soul was far away, and his eyes saw not the plate. The plateholder wanted a threepenny bit, but the Infinite was more in Dionysius Boggles's line just then. 'Mark my words," said Boggles paterfamilias to Selina Cerulea, "there'll be a pome come out on this yer subjeck, all out of 'is own 'ead !"

The great Missionary Meeting concluded, the audience dispersed to their respective homes ; and ere long the village poet reposed upon his couch, whither he had repaired with his mind full of all he had heard, and inspired with the determination to leave Slowville-cum-Ditch and to become a missionary.

And that night Dionysius Boggles dreamed a dream.

And in his dream one stood beside his bed robed in white and dazzling raiment. And Dionysius, looking up, saw that he was an Angel, and his heart began to be afraid. But the Angel said, "Fear not ; what is in thy heart ?"

And Dionysius answered, "It is in my heart to be even as the holy men I have heard to-night."

"If it is in thy heart," said the Angel, "to be a bearer of the Good Tidings, rise, come with me !"

Then the soul of Dionysius filled with great joy ; visions of far-off sunny lands, with throngs of listening and admiring heathen, floated before him, and he rose to follow the Angel whithersoever he should lead him. And the Angel took him to a great city.



They stood beneath a low and gloomy archway, the walls and roof all green and dank and dripping. Hard by they heard the weird and melancholy rush of swiftly-flowing water.

The brightness of the Angel's garments seemed to fill the place with light, and they saw stretched upon the rough and uneven stones beneath that reeking roof, little children. Little children, with no covering save their scanty rags, with no pillow but the cold granite flagstones—save where some poor infant had laid its tiny head upon the half-naked bosom of an elder child—their little hands stretched out or twined around each others' necks—their faces looking ghastly pale in the bright light, some with delicate features and clustering, curly hair—little children, boys and girls, sleeping.

Oh, parents, I pray you think a moment of this first vision the Angel showed—and God knows that any night, perhaps within but a few yards of your warm, bright home, you can see it for yourselves. You to whom the Great Father has given little ones—you to whom the sweet prattle of infant tongues

the touch of soft infant lips upon the face, the twining of infant arms around the neck—you to whom the nestling of little heads upon the bosom is familiar—think of it !

Anon the dripping from the moist roof above them woke some of the little ones from their slumber, and their little lips reviled, and cursed, and swore.

Shuddering, Dionysius gazed upon the scene, and the Angel said, "These are some of the lambs of my Master's flock, Who said, 'Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven,' long ago. Of poor stray lambs, such as these, there are in this great City round us hundreds and thousands, untended by the Shepherds of my Master's flock."

\* \* \* \* \*

They stood on one of the bridges which spanned a darkly flowing river, and the gleam of the Angel's garments shone upon the shivering, shuddering form of a woman crouched close against the greasy stonework of one of the parapets. Her scanty clothes hung about her in tatters, and on her pale face—in her bloodshot eyes and haggard features—were the awful stains of sin and vice and crime.

Her evil face, perhaps, was all innocent once ; her bleary eyes the light, perhaps, of some happy home and some good man's heart ; perhaps there was a time when the burning head,

bowed so low, the grey hair hanging now all loose and unkempt, pillowed itself upon a good man's bosom—when a father's or a lover's hand stroked and fondled the glossy locks upon it. She knelt perhaps in church once, thought Dionysius, and joined in holy chant and prayer—perhaps some little village church far away from the great City, with its riches and its sins and its snares ; its gaudy Halls of vice and its dark, black-flowing river. Some little village church where all the countryside, gentle and simple, used to gather Sunday after Sunday—some little church, outside which the green trees used to grow, shadowing the white grave-stones under which the rude forefathers of the hamlet slept ; great trees that in the golden summer time rustled a sweet “Amen” through the open windows to the prayers with which the kneeling people accompanied the white-robed minister to the Throne of Grace. Perhaps her brow—the foul and dirty brow pressed against the greasy stonework of the bridge—was laved from the white font in the porch with the waters of Holy Baptism. Perhaps, later on, at the Holy Table with its “fair white cloth,” her lips—vile and reeking with oaths and curses now, and the unclean kisses of lust—received the Bread of Life.

‘Tottering, she rose to her feet. With a hasty movement she sprang upon the parapet. On the parapet—her arms wide outstretched, and her hunted eyes turned for a moment up to the dark, black night-sky. One wild, despairing scream—a horrid splash in the black river beneath—and over the body of “one more unfortunate, rashly importunate,” closed its dark waters.

“One of the lost sheep,” said the Angel solemnly, “of my Master’s flock, Who said ‘I came to seek and to save that which was lost,’ and Who rebuked those who would have repelled the Magdalene when she sought to anoint His holy feet with ointment. And of these lost sheep there are in this great City round us hundreds and thousands, unfound, if not unsought, by the Shepherds of my Master’s flock.”

\* \* \* \* \*

A foul, foetid, fever-breeding slum, within a brief walk from the Cathedral church of the richest City in the Christian world. Into one of the wretched hovels entered the Angel and Dionysius.

A guttering candle burned upon the floor of the dirty room, casting a flickering light upon a mattress in the corner, whereon a man was tossing, whose face and limbs were burning with the fires of a terrible fever. He was raving, uttering wild anathemas, flinging his arms about from side to side in agony ; anon tearing his naked fever-scorched flesh with his long nails. Huddled upon the floor by the mattress was a woman, her hands clasped about her knees. She was swaying herself to and fro, moaning unintelligibly, a heartrending picture of misery and despair. Near her were two hollow-eyed children, crying one word, “Food, Food !”

On a heap of shavings in another corner was stretched the form of a second man, a torn sack partially covering him. The angel uncovered the face and upper part of the body, and

Dionysius saw that it was the corpse of an old man, with white hair and beard. The limbs were thin and bony, the chest and ribs almost fleshless. And Dionysius said, "Starved—in the midst of plenty—starved to Death!"

"These are some of the poor and sick," said the Angel, "of my Master's flock, Who said of such as they, 'these my brethren,' and who Himself had not where to lay His head. And of such as these there are many thousands in this wealthy City, unvisited, unrelieved by the Shepherds of my Master's flock."

\* \* \* \* \*

They stood again outside, and Dionysius turned to the Angel and said, "Sir, why have you shown me these things?"

And the Angel said, "Listen : you who would fain go many thousands of miles to teach the heathen. Is your mind stored with deep and profound learning, that you could refute the subtle arguments with which some Pagan philosophers might meet you?"

Dionysius thought of his epic poem on the Bursting of the Pump, and was disposed to answer "yes," but he held his peace.

" ' Have you," continued the Angel, "strength of will and purpose and body to live for many years amongst those you would teach, living as one of them, holding your peace until



you could speak to them as one of themselves rather than as a being of a different and superior order—casting away from you, utterly and for ever, all thoughts of home and friends, all thoughts and care of self, all thoughts of wife and children ? ”

“ I . . . I would rather take Eliza Jane with me—if . . . if you please ! ” said Dionysius.

Then the Angel raised his hand and said again, “ Listen. Let those who are called and fitted, go where you would fain have gone. But let what I have shewn you to-night in this City, close to your country home, bear in upon your mind, and upon the minds of many others through you, that without crossing the wide seas, *You will find plenty of Missionary Work to go on with at home !* ”





## BRITISH INTERESTS.

---

**T**HE soldiers march'd to the merry play  
Of stirring drum and fife ;  
When a British Interest's in the way,  
Who reck's of human life ?  
When a British Interest's wanting blood,  
It ought to be shed galore :  
Hip, hip, hurrah for the purple flood,  
For carnage, wounds and gore !

“ My lords ” and Commons declar'd it right  
England to war should go ;  
The Army said we were bound to fight,  
And they of course would know.  
The Bishops agreed, with prayerful eyes—  
Our peaceful priests of God—  
Hip, hip, hurrah for the widow's sighs,  
And the soldier's bloody sod !

All fair and bright in a foreign sky  
The day of battle broke ;  
Our colonel then with a gleaming eye  
His last monition spoke.  
He bade us fight that day our best  
For dear old England's weal,  
And for her interests, which would rest  
Upon our shot and steel.

Then on thro' the sand with swift black feet  
Our dusky foemen came ;  
And firmly we stood their charge to meet,  
With guns at deadly aim.  
In white and black a murderous fire  
Glow'd like the flames of hell ;  
And on us all, as the sun rose higher,  
God's blessed sunshine fell !

One man I mark'd of the shouting foe  
Who closer near'd our square ;  
His mien was manly and brave, altho'  
His swarthy skin was bare.  
O'er his swelling breast no shield he wore,  
But, with a rough-hewn dart,  
In his long right arm a spear he bore,  
Poised for a white man's heart.

I thought of all I had heard them say  
 Of England's Right and Need ;  
 And I said " yon savage man I'll slay —  
 My hand shall do the deed."  
 'Twas only a short, sharp flash, as sped  
 The bullet from my gun —  
 And only a nigger lying dead,  
 His face turn'd to the sun.

\* \* \* \* \*

The fight is finished, and gently blows  
 The evening's cooler breath ;  
 The daylight dies, and the shadows close  
 Around the plain of death.  
 The air is rent with the groan and scream  
 Of mortal human pain ;  
 The ground is red with the awful stream  
 That curs'd the soul of Cain.

Shine not, shine not, O thou silver moon —  
 Shine not, shine not, to-night ;  
 O God of Heav'n, it is yet too soon  
 For the starbeams' holy light !  
 But spread wide, O night, thy sable pall,  
 Lest Angel eyes should see  
 What mean men by the thing they call  
 A Glorious Victory !

\* \* \* \* \*

The place where his body lay I knew,  
And that night I stood beside  
The cold, stark corse of the man I slew  
In the battle-morning's pride.  
And back to the spot my conscience flies,  
And, as then, I see him now—  
With an awful look in his haunting eyes,  
And with blood upon his brow.

“Oh ! to some dusky bosom dear  
Thy poor wet brow must be ;  
Some stricken soul, in woe and fear,  
Will wait and weep for thee.  
With a life I took goes out the light  
From some poor heart for aye :  
Perchance for thy return to-night  
Some little children pray !”

And from High Heaven Itself looks down  
The awful eye of God ;  
Who sees, thro' the midnight sky's black frown,  
This man on the dripping sod.  
Oh ! He will not think of the pomp and show,  
And the pride of war's parade,  
But see only the corse of the man so low  
By my red fingers laid.

Still in dreams I haunt that distant strand,  
And I feel on me again  
The avenging Hand which set the brand  
On the shrinking brow of Cain.  
The man I slew appears to me  
So near, by night and day ;  
*And British Interests seem to be*  
*So very far away.*





## JIM: A HERO.

### A CURATE'S STORY.

---



HERO, truly, but such a queer one ! Somehow the idea of a hero is always associated in the popular mind with the ring of rifles and the booming of cannon ; with the clash of martial steel, and the fierce, wild cry of battle. We make graven images of our successful warriors, and stick them on the summit of high monuments, and scatter them about S. Paul's Cathedral, that all men may pay them homage. How appropriate to rear in the House of God the images of men who have led armies, and won battles ; who have destroyed towns and cities and shed human blood. But poor Jim was not anything of that sort. He was not even respectable, he didn't dress properly—he wore awfully tattered clothes, had a battered old hat, and only one boot and a half. Besides he only went to church once in his life, so of course he was not respectable. In fact, if I could have held him up to inspection—this poor, wretched, half-starved, vulgar boy—

everybody would have exclaimed : "Take him away to prison, or the reformatory, or to an unsectarian board-school, or something of that sort ; what a nasty, dirty little fellow ! " And yet there is an altar in the corner of my heart where I perpetually offer the incense of fervent veneration for the memory of this ragamuffin gutter-boy.

I started from home one Sunday evening, uncertain on what subject to preach that night to the congregation I was to address. The winter had not yet passed, and the wind blew cold and keen. The doors of churches and chapels were already open, but none save well-dressed people were entering. I passed a large Fine Art Museum, which on week-days was crowded with *bona fide* working men and their families, but being Sunday it was now, of course, shut up ; while the gin palaces, being, equally of course, open, were doing a roaring trade. I could see, through the bright windows of these gaudy hell traps, fashionably-attired men, young and old, intelligent mechanics, ragged beggarmen. I could see lost women—dare I call them women ?—with evil eyes made bright, and painted cheeks made hot, with the light and warmth of wine.

What goodly souls, in very truth, are wrecked amid the dangers of this wicked London life ! And suddenly I thought to myself, "I will speak to the people to-night about the Life of Christ ; I will preach to-night of the Perfect Life."



I felt strangely dejected as I thought of the terrible distance which separates us all from that truly "higher life;" when I thought how far short fall the best of lives when compared with the life of Him who lived not for Himself. These mournful thoughts were still with me as I ascended the pulpit. The Parish where my church was situated was a very poor one, but not so the congregation. Poor people have been frightened away from religion by its intense respectability. So, as I gazed around my "dear brethren," everybody was looking comfortable and self-satisfied. When we knelt for the General Confession, there was quite a loud rustling of silk and satin from the female "dearly beloved" behind me, and they said they were miserable sinners so sweetly and so nicely. There were no nasty, dirty labouring men present. Oh, no!—no threadbare coats, no tattered dresses. But stay, I am saying too much; for just as I was about to announce my text I saw in a draughty seat near the porch a live London arab! a boy in rags and tatters, a boy with thin, pale, dirty face and dirty hands, with wild unkempt hair—nervous, restless eyes. How he came there I know not, save that God sent him.

Passionately in earnest did I feel that night, full was my heart, and involuntary were the tears which flooded my eyes, as we went through the scenes of the one Life of absolute unselfishness.

Turning over my diary I see almost the very words I used as I brought my sermon to a close; will you forgive me, my reader, if I re-produce them here?

“Have I moved one single soul here to live in future above self, nearer to the life we have studied? Have I inspired one heart with the resolution, in however humble and quiet a sphere, to emulate the great example; or even to accomplish, if God see fit to give the opportunity, some high and holy deed—some great, grand act of heroism which shall elevate the life-history of him who achieves it closer to the sublime life on earth of the Hero of heroes, the Man of men?”

A loud rustle of clothes followed the last word; it was the congregation “waking up from the sermon.” I did not think I had reached the heart of one man or woman there.

Before leaving the church I made inquiries of the “pew-opener” as to the ragged boy I had noticed; I only discovered that he was at present a crossing-sweeper, and that he said his name was “Jim.”

\* \* \* \*

“Fire! fire!” Loud through the deserted midnight streets rang the sudden alarm.

“Fire! fire! fire!”—and past the vicarage house dashed the engine. I threw a cape over my shoulders and joined the crowd gathering in the wake of the fast-speeding vehicle.

A house on fire. Fierce flames, leaping from the burning window, were reflected brightly in the winter sky, and poured red light on the ground, and the eager faces of the crowd watching the scene.

Suddenly above the roar of the flames rises a scream of anguish : " My child, O God, my child ! " It is a woman's voice ; and there we see her kneeling on the ground, weeping and wringing her hands. She was the last rescued, unconscious, from the doomed house ; but we know, seeing her thus, that her child has been forgotten ; we know by the gaze of her eyes that her child is in that burning upper room.

A tremor runs through the crowd. There are brave men and true among that crowd, men whose daily toil brings them face to face with danger and with death ; but as they look up to that flaming chamber and see how far short their one ladder reaches, each heart grows sick with despair ; what can they do, even though they count their lives as nothing.

" My child—O God—my child ! "

The poor mother weeps not alone now ; women and even men are crying with her.

A slight movement causes me to turn my head ; and just by my side is that ragged boy, still in the tatters in which I saw him first. But a strange light is on the pale face now ; a strange light glows in his eyes, fixed where the tearful gaze of the mother is fixed ; a light like that which must have filled the eyes of Horatius when he stood forward to keep the bridge ; a light like that which must have glowed in the eyes of the men of the Light Brigade as they charged into the "valley of death."

Without a word he springs forward, the light still on his face, still glowing in his eyes. One wild deafening cheer rings out from the crowd ; and then with throbbing hearts and bated breath we watch the daring boy. Quickly he springs up the ladder and steps out on the window-ledge : and then with dizzy eyes we see him clinging to the thick pipe which runs down the front of the house.

As by a miracle he reaches the room. O God ! how the second lingers. But at last we see him again, standing at one of the windows. Then another wild cheer bursts from each heart, for in his arms he bears the child. The gesture he makes is understood ; to descend further is impossible : so strong arms are stretched out to receive the child as he lets it fall. Eager fingers unwrap the thick covering which envelopes it, and the mother's arms close around her darling — saved !

A cry is raised that further help is coming ; but alas ! it comes too late, for with a great crash the house falls in.

Sorely wounded, almost dead, we find poor little Jim, and bear him from the scene of his glorious deed to a quiet chamber in the vicarage.

All that could be done for him had been done ; his broken limbs had been set, and his scorched, burnt flesh had been anointed and bound up. All day long someone had kept watch by his side : and now the night had come, and we knew that it would be the last night on earth for the dying hero. I was waiting with him—waiting for the coming of the hour.

It was very quiet outside ; the din and bustle hushed. A beautiful night ; just such a night, I thought, as I should like to pass away in if we could choose the time of our departure. The sky was clear and calm, bright with the light of a million stars, shedding on the snow so beautiful a radiance that I could well-nigh have believed that the Golden Gates had been opened for a space, and that a reflection of the light of the Celestial City was shining down upon this time-worn, weary world. Inside the chamber only the restless movement of the dying boy broke the silence. At last he fell into an uneasy sleep. I held the light above him and

gazed into his face, looking almost child-like now, but with the hand of death already there. Suddenly his eyes opened with a dreamy, far-away look in them. I took his hand in mine and knelt by the bedside, placing my ear close to his white and trembling lips. He was murmuring words of which he seemed unconscious, from which I learnt the inspiration of his grand, heroic act—speaking in broken language of Christ, of His life, and His love, and His self-sacrifice.

Poor Jim, how well you learnt the lesson I had striven to teach that previous Sabbath evening, the lesson which needs such strenuous teaching in this selfish and cynical and luxurious age.

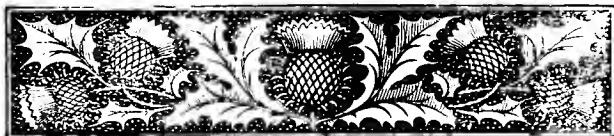
A softer light came into his eyes, and a softer smile played about his lips.

Closer still I bent my head. He was speaking now of the early scenes in the story, at Bethlehem and Nazareth.

When full consciousness returned, he recognised me ; and we spoke and prayed together. Then I sprinkled water upon the forehead of this nameless Christian.

Just as the cold grey dawn was breaking, the light of eternity broke upon the spirit of poor little Jim. As I folded his hands and closed his eyes, sightless for evermore to things of earth, I prayed for the same spirit as that which had inspired the heart of that brave dead boy, who knew so little and did so much.





## SISTER RUTH: A HEROINE.

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AT the time of the outbreak of the Crimean War I was sergeant in Her Majesty's——th foot, and with me were a goodly number of old comrades with whom I had fought under the burning sun of the tropics ; and, taken all round, men and equipments, few better regiments ever took the field than our gallant lot (tnough I say it), when, soon after the declaration, we were told off for duty in the East. I shan't forget how we were cheered when we embarked for the seat of war—how proudly and hopefully we set out, but, alas ! how few of us ever returned to the dear old country. I said all my good-byes before we left London, but many of our fellows had to say the word to father, mother, wife, sweetheart, brother, sister, friends—just before we sailed ; and there was many a tearful parting between those who were never to meet again.



Amongst the last to say the final good-bye I noticed our young ensign, a bright noble young fellow, not many years past twenty. He stood between father and mother—an old white-headed couple who might well fear their eyes would never behold him again. I saw the old man look upward for a moment with joined hands, and silently bless his boy; and then the last embrace was given and the shore-bell rang out its loud unwelcome signal.

We landed safely, and took part in most of the work our friend the enemy gave us to do, till the memorable day of Inkermann arrived. Cold and gloomy broke the dawn of that fifth of November. A thick fog hung over the camp, and we could scarcely see from tent to tent. Almost before the bugles woke us from our brief slumber, the booming of the enemy's guns gave warning of the approaching struggle. Then loud over the foggy field echoed the blast of our trumpets, and from tent to tent, from man to man, rang the cry, "The Russians are upon us!"

Scarcely had we time to arm and form before we heard the solid tramp of quickly marching men, and saw, through the yellow mist, closing in around us the grey-coated legions of the foe. And then began in fearful earnest that fearful fight, the tradition of which will never die out from the heart of the British nation, or fade from the memory of the British army. Man to man, bayonet to bayonet, sword to

sword! How long the fight had continued when the incident I am going to speak of occurred I do not know. Ever since the commencement of the fray our regiment had been incessantly engaged; and we had managed to keep pretty well together, close to the colours held by poor Ensign Gray. As the hours went on, however, our number grew less and less; many a brave comrade falling never to rise again, and many being gradually beaten back. At last only eighty or a hundred remained together, when suddenly a mounted officer dashed up, exclaiming—

“Look out,—th, the enemy's cavalry is upon you!”

Even as he shouted we heard the thud of hoofs upon the turf, and the jingling of spurs and bits. A moment afterwards they were close on us—a small but solid square kneeling round the flag. A volley from each side emptied many a saddle and laid many of our gallant comrades on the ground, never to “receive cavalry charge” any more. Our square was broken, and the Russian troops rode in upon us. Sword in one hand and the colours in the other, his fair curly hair falling around his bared forehead, and a brave passionate light glaring on his face, stood poor Ensign Gray. But only for a second, for like a lightning flash fell a sabre, cutting a ghastly wound across his head. He fell, and the colours he had defended so bravely were carried off by the trooper who smote him!

"Good God!" he groaned—and I shall never forget the terrible anguish of his voice—"they've got the colours! On, lads, on—bring me back the colours or die!"

"Bring me back the colours!" None but a soldier can realise fully how such an appeal must influence a soldier's heart, filling it with a burning, desperate, wrathful courage, which shot and shell and steel, and the certainty of death, cannot daunt. "Bring me back the colours!" But alas! the dying man seemed speaking only to the dead and the dying; faithful fellows who would have shed their blood to place that flag in his hand again, had met already a glorious death around it. Only one man remained unwounded of the square over which the Russian horsemen had ridden—that man myself. Again the cry, with the same accent of bitter agony and despair, "Bring me back the colours." But before the words were finished I had leaped upon a riderless steed hard by, and thrust the jagged point of a broken sword into his side. On, on, after the flying troops, a mad, wild chase to win the colours back or die. A sudden volley from the French guns (for our allies were now in the field) played upon the Russian horsemen, and the sight of a British cavalry regiment, preparing to charge, dispersed them in every direction, and the man who had taken the colours—our colours—was cut off from his comrades. Wild with hope, I tore on (bullets flying thickly about me), getting nearer and nearer, inch by inch, to the man I pursued—till at length we were level. A short,

sharp struggle, and the colours were mine, the Russian trooper dead. How I got back I don't know: the next thing I remember is bending over our ensign, and putting the colours, all blood-stained and bullet-riddled, into his hands.

And hark ! above the rattle of the gradually ceasing fusillade rise ringing shouts. The great Battle of Inkermann is fought : who has won it ?

What are those triumphant voices shouting ? Thank God ! for they are crying " Hurrah ! " and " *Vive l' Empereur !* "—the allies have conquered.

" Sergeant ! "—said my dying officer—" if ever you get back to the dear old country, tell them—father and mother I mean—that I died with the colours in my hand." The end was coming quickly. With an effort he raised his hand and broke from the colours a strip hanging only by a thread or two, saying, "'Tis the best thing I can leave you, sergeant—take it, for of all the brave hearts here, living and dead, yours is the bravest."

Then the summons came for the roll-call we must all answer ; and he whispered, " Good-bye, comrade "—and fell in.

Close, fast and thick, oh ! gathering shades of eventide, over the field of battle. Hide thy light, oh ! setting sun—blood-red, as though the field of carnage were reflected in thy face. Oh ! moon and stars, shine not to-night upon a scene like this.

I was wending my way slowly back to the tents some hours after the last shot had been fired, when a sudden gleam of light revealed a sight which seems never to have faded from my mind. Stretched on the cold ground, wet with evening dew and scarlet streams of blood—her eyes half-closed, her fair white hands clasped together in prayerful attitude : a look of ineffable peace upon her pale, delicate features, lay a Sister of Mercy. Oh, rightly are they called so, the God of Mercy bless them !

By her side were the food and wine and medicine she had brought wherewith to succour the wounded. But alas ! dear sister, never more shall thy tender hands and kindly voice fulfil their offices of love, for from the pure and gentle heart which inspired them, blood is surging slowly through the black dress. Oh, I pray God that the bullet which has struck thee was fired not wilfully—and may the Good Shepherd gather thee to His bosom, poor lamb ! Then I knelt by her side, and reverently covered with the silken strip of our regiment's banner what was in very truth the noblest, bravest heart on the field of Inkermann.

Very tenderly I carried her to her sisters in the rear, and on the day following the morrow of her death I saw her buried, with the beautiful rites of her Church. And my thoughts often wander to a little grave some thousands of miles away, on the rough headstone of which is written the name of

SISTER RUTH.





## “LA VENDETTA.”

### AN OPERATIC ABSURDIETTA.

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As “A Round Dozen” is likely to be largely used by those interested in Public and Drawing Room Entertainments, this original Operetta is included. It has been set to music by Mr. Lindsay Pembroke, and copies of the score, with permission for performance, can be obtained by addressing the Author (care of the publishers of this volume).

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#### PERSONS REPRESENTED.

SIGNOR BASTINADO SAN LA

CRAMBO . . . . . *A Waiter.*

SIGNORITA BIANCA NAPOLI.

SIGNOR JAMBO CHEVALIER INFLA-

TOSE MASHA COCKADOODLEDOO *A Military Man.*

SIGNOR ANGELO BLANCO . . . *An Organ Man.*

SIGNORA VERMICELLI BLANCO

(*Signorita Vermicelli Maccaroni*) *His Wife*

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ARGUMENT.

All the characters are Italian, and each has sworn "*La Vendetta*" against one of the others. Having fled to England in pursuit of one another, they all meet in a Restaurant in Soho, where "*La Vendetta*" is executed all round, after general indulgence in recriminations and refreshments.

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*[As the position of door, tables, etc., is not material, and may be arranged as best suits any particular stage, minute stage directions are not given.]*

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SCENE :

THE INTERIOR OF A RESTAURANT IN SOHO.

*[Tables laid, etc. A circular settee (or a table) in centre, on top of which are five clean white table-cloths, folded.]*

SIGNOR BASTINADO SAN LA CRAMBO, *the Waiter, discovered standing near the settee, waiting the advent of customers.*]

CRAMBO. I'm the Signor Bastinado San La Crambo !

My veins with blood Italian flow, the bluest of the blue ;

*[Bares his arm, showing very large blue-painted veins.]*



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I've come to this cold England for to stab the Signor  
Jambo  
Chevalier Inflatose Masha Cockadoodledoo.  
For against him "La Vendetta" in the sunny South I  
swore—  
The awful wrong he did me I forget—'twas montins  
ago—  
But the Author has arranged for me to dabble in his  
gore  
Within this lordly cookshop in the district of Soho.

Sing Chops and Blood and Kidney Soup !  
Sing Gore and Baked Potatoes !  
Sing Rosbif and a Coffin for  
The Chevalier Inflatose !

I'm the Signor Bastinado San La Crambo !  
A real blue-blood Italian, as I think I said before ;  
But until I've drunk the life-blood of the hated Signor  
Jambo,  
The dear girls of my country will not see me any  
more.  
I'm disguised now as a waiter, to assist the Author's  
plot,  
Of which the full particulars you very soon will  
know,—

But I wish you all to understand the sort of berth I've got,

Though a waiter in a cookshop in the district of Soho!

*[Draws long dagger from his trouser, and makes play therewith.]*

Sing Chops and Blood and Kidney Soup!

Sing Gore and Baked Potatoes:

Sing Rosbif and a Coffin for

The Chevalier Inflatose!

*[He sharpens the dagger along the leg of his trouser.]*

*(Spoken, looking at door).* Ha! ha! a customer within a "measurable distance!"

*[Thrusts the dagger partly down his trouser again.]*

*(Enter SIGNORITA BIANCA NAPOLI.*

*[She takes a seat.*

BIANCA. Waiter!

CRAMBO. Yes, Mees, I come to you!

*[Struggles with dagger, falls in the struggle, rises and approaches her.]*

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BIANCA. Bring me a steak á la rump, underdore.

CRAMBO. Yes, Signorita ! Lady, forgive me, you are also Italian ?

BIANCO. I am.

CRAMBO. Your name is the Signorita Bianca Napoli, of Florence.

BIANCA And you, Signor ?

CRAMBO. I am the Signor Bastinado San La Crambo. We have met before.

BIANCA. When ?

CRAMBO. Oft in the stilly night !

BIANCA. You surprise me ! But where, Signor ?

CRAMBO. On the Rialto ! But what does the Signorita in Engiand ?

BIANCA. Angelo Blanco deceived me, and I have sworn against him La Vendetta. He has fled to England, and I am on his ter-rack !

CRAMBO. You surprise me ! I've sworn La Vendetta too.

BIANCA. Against—— ?

CRAMBO. Why against old Jambo. You didn't know me. He always said he was a Military Man, and as soon as he heard I had declared the awful Blood-feud against him, he executed a strategic movement with extraordinary rapidity, and fled to England, like your Angelo. Every day I am in hope that Jambo, being in England, will come in here to be killed. You said steak à la rump, Signorita, underdone ?

BIANCA. I did. But listen !

*(She rises and sings.)*

A human life I've sworn to take !

CRAMBO. Will you have potatoes with your steak ?

BIANCA. I'll slay him, sure as the morrow's sun.

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CRAMBO. How do you like your potatoes done ?

BIANCA. By night and day of my Oath I think !

CRAMBO. What will you please to take to drink ?

BIANCA. A pint of stout.

TOGETHER. The awful Vendetta we've sworn, we've  
sworn—

She'll (I'll) take a rump-steak underdone —

Far wiser our foes had they never been born --  
A steak and potatoes for one !

BIANCA. My steel I'll thrust through his craven heart !

CRAMBO. Have any custard or apple-tart ?

BIANCA. To search for him I've crossed the seas !

CRAMBO. Gorgonzola or Cheshire cheese ?

BIANCA. My hate the Red Indian's hate doth dwarf !

CRAMBO. I'm sorry to say that "steak is orf !"

BIANCA. I'll take a chop.

TOGETHER. The awful Vendetta we've sworn, we've sworn—

Our foes by the dagger shall drop—

'Twere better for them had they never been born—

"Steak is orf," and she'll (I'll) please take a chop !

[*The military bugle sounds.*

[*Enter the* SIGNOR JAMBO CHEVALIER INFLATOSE MASHA COCKADOODLEDOO, *attired in semi-military costume, evening dress in front, armour behind, but enveloped in long overcoat. Fashionable beaver hat. Large umbrella. Large spurs to his boots.*]

CRAMBO (*trembling violently*). Oh, I say ! it's old Jambo !  
He's come at last. I—I'm so glad !

BIANCA. Go and Vendetta him at once.

CRAMBO. With pleasure! (*approaches JAMBO*).

Signor J—J—Jambo Cock—Cock—a—doodle—doo  
—oo—oo, I presume?

JAMBO. The same! And if any man desires to know more  
of me—

[*Flings aside his overcoat to the floor, and sings:*

I'm a military pot, although I own I'm not attached to  
any regular brigade,

But I've been in a retreat, and the quickest time I beat,  
that any human being ever made;

For the fire was very hot, and I thought I might get  
shot, and I didn't want to prematurely die—

Like a soldier for to fall, if I feel that way at all, there'll  
be quite sufficient time by and bye.

Of original design is this uniform of mine, the sight of  
which would make an army quail—

It is open on the breast, but my mother thought it best  
to put my rearward portions into mail!

[*Turns round and faces again.*

All the nursemaids turn their eyes with a sweet and  
glad surprise, as through the Park I walk with  
steady tramp ;

[*Opens and shuts umbrella.*

And the Duke of Cambridge swore that his royal  
hands ne'er bore, in battle or review, a bigger  
gamp !

At the jingle of my spurs, all the frightened little curs  
put their tails between their legs at once and fly ;  
And if only I had been sent to Egypt by the Queen, I  
guess I should have flummuxed the Mahdi :  
For I'd formed a little plan, as a Military Man, for to  
drive the rebel army in the Nile—  
And their leader I'd have lent, for to give some nutri-  
ment, to a joyful little gentle crocodile !

CRAMBO (*drawing his dagger*). Very pretty. But excuse  
me, I've sworn La Vendetta against you, and I will  
avail myself of this pause in the conversation to  
execute it, if you have no religious objection.

[*Approaches* JAMBO. JAMBO *spars with his umbrella :*  
*burlesque sword-fight ensues.*]



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JAMBO. Hold! enough!

CRAMBO. Ha! ha! *[Both lower their weapons.]*

JAMBO. I shall apply to the New Law Courts for an Injunction to restrain you from further proceedings.

CRAMBO. Not thus shall you escape my vengeance, Jambo. If once you get inside the New Law Courts, you never will be able to find your way out! And upon what grounds, Signor, would you apply for your Injunction?

JAMBO. Upon the ground that I also have sworn La Vendetta, and must have time to execute it. I have sworn that whensoever and wheresoever I meet the Signorita Vermicelli Maccaroni I will kill her, provided only she is unarmed, defenceless and not looking! She interfered with a love affair of mine with another girl, and her doom is as certain as that of an Irish landlord!

CRAMBO. You surprise me, brave Signor!

JAMBO. Will you agree to defer killing me until I have slain *my* enemy?

CRAMBO. I will, old chap.

*[Returns dagger to his trouser.*

JAMBO (*to* BIANCA). The Signorita is going to lunch? I will lunch with her. Waiter, bring hither a chop à la chump!

CRAMBO. Did the signor say bring a chop for a chump?

JAMBO. An insult! but give it a Free-pass!

*[Barrel-organ heard faintly outside.*

But hush! hark! what sound comes like a rising knell?

Did ye not hear it?

BIANCA. No! 'twas but a cat! or p'raps the echo of a high-church bell—

(*to* CRAMBO). Bring thou our chops! let joy be unconfined.

When two Italians meet, and Albion's chump chops with potatoes eat!

CRAMBO (*aside*). Is that I-ronic or By-ronic?  
[*Barrel organ heard more distinctly.*]

Who stands persistent, on the curb,  
The sick man's slumbers to disturb?  
Who smiles at comminatory verb?  
The Organ Man!

Who than Egyptian plagues is worse?  
Who'd look much nicer in a hearse?  
Who's heedless of a nation's curse?  
The Organ Man!

[ANGELO BLANCO *advances a step or two stealthily.*

JAMBO, CRAMBO, *and* BIANCA. Go away!

CRAMBO. Go away to an Unsectarian Board School!

[*Walks up to ANGELO and smacks him in both his eyes.*

ANGELO (*dropping his organ, or leaning it against wall, covering his eyes with his hands, and entering a little further inside*).

I see more stars of various shapes, good waiter,  
Than are dreamed of in your astronomy!

VERMICELLI (*to* CRAMBO). You have struck my husband!  
You have struck an Italian nobleman in disguise—and  
very good disguise too—in both of his eyes! Against  
you I swear La Vendetta!

CRAMBO. You surprise me.

VERMICELLI. We came here to play you a little tune, and  
instead of receiving us in an artistic spirit, you have  
struck one of us in both eyes! But come, Angelo, we  
shall get no relief here—we will go and play a little  
tune to the kind gentlemen we have heard about, who  
will help us and give us food, because we are poor.

JAMBO. Halt! attention!! Who are these kind gentlemen  
who help the needy?

ANGELO. They are called the C.O.S.

JAMBO. 'The what?

VERMICELLI. The Charity Organization Society. (*To*  
ANGELO) Lets sing the pretty song you composed about  
them.

---

ANGELO. Ye poor, whose cries of want arise,  
     Oh ! are you not aware  
 That "Charity" they "Organize"  
     Somewhere near Brunswick Square?  
 That you should any longer need  
     Is really most absurd—  
 The C. O. S. the hungry feed—  
     H'm—that is what I've heard.

VERMICELLI. You've only got to demonstrate,  
     To prove beyond a doubt,  
 That in the evening after eight  
     You never have been out—  
 Prove you've ne'er been known to speak  
     A single naughty word—  
 They'll give you half-a-loaf a week—  
     H'm !—that is what I've heard !

ANGELO. If your mamas and grandmamas  
     Were always very good—  
 Nothing wrong with your grandpapas—  
     Then they will give you food ;  
 If in your lives no little lurch  
     From virtue e'er occurred ;  
 And if your dead aunts went to church—  
     H'm !—that is what I've heard !

---

VERMICELLI. But if some ancestor remote  
A tarradiddle told,  
Then not for you a single groat—  
They'd rather keep their gold  
Until an Angel earthward wings  
And begs a loaf of bread—  
If a written character he brings,  
They'll help him—so 'tis said !

JAMBO. Bravely sung ! What is your name, sirrah !

ANGELO. My name is Angelo Blanco, Signor.

BIANCA. I thought so. Would you be surprised to hear  
that I've sworn La Vendetta against you !

ANGELO. You don't mean it !

BIANCA. It is even so, and you must die !

ANGELO. But, look here ! I recognise you now. You're  
the Signorita Bianca Napoli ?

BIANCA. I was ; and to the best of my belief, I am.

ANGELO. Well, you played it very low down with me, and  
*I've* sworn La Vendetta against *you* !

JAMBO. Silence? an awful suspicion has occurred to me  
(*To* VERMICELLI) What was your maiden name?

VERMICELLI. I was the Signorita Vermicelli Mac-  
caroni.

JAMBO Then you are the identical individual against whom  
I, the Signor Jambo Chevalier Inflatose Masha  
Cockadoodledoo, have sworn La Vendetta !

CRAMBO. Look here, we're all getting mixed. I've sworn  
it against Jambo !

JAMBO. And I against Signora Blanco !

VERMICELLI. And I against this waiter !

BIANCA. And I against Angelo Blanco !



---

ANGELO. And I against Bianca Napoli !

JAMBO. This is one of the most extraordinary things !

OMNES. It is !

JAMBO. La Vendetta is a sacred thing !

OMNES. It is !

JAMBO. It must be carried out Omnes.

OMNES. It must !

JAMBO. Has anybody got such a thing as a dagger in his pocket ?

CRAMBO (*drawing his dagger from his trouser*). Here !

JAMBO. Compatriots ! there is only one course open to us.  
We will sit down and enjoy a last meal, and after that  
we will all kill each other in proper order. Do you  
agree ?

OMNES. We do ! we do ! we do !

JAMBO. Waiter, bring chops and beer for all of us.

[CRAMBO *shouts the order up the list, then stands or sits near the centre settee or table, sharpening his dagger as before. The other four sit in one of the boxes (or at a table, according to arrangement of stage accessories). The four at the table begin to rattle impatiently their knives and forks.*]

JAMBO, ANGELO, BIANCA, VERMICELLI.

If you wish to make us swear, Oh you lazy waiter there,  
the old familiar oaths you soon will hear,—

You'll be numbered with the dead, and we'll also punch  
your head, unless you quickly bring our chops  
and beer.

As we're all a-going to die, there can be no reason why  
you should rashly raise our anger by delay,—

If our hunger still you spurn, we will send you out of  
turn, to——Italia Irrendenta ! !——straight away !

CRAMBO. Coming ! coming !

[*Brings dinners and sets them on the table. Resumes his seat.*]

---

JAMBO, ANGELO, BIANCA, VERMICELLI.

Our last meal on earth we're going to assimilate,  
Before with one another's blood our fingers we incriminate ;  
Our final end has come because we all would go  
Vendetta-ing,  
And so our last good-bye to earth and earthly things  
we'd bettah sing !

BIANCA. A long farewell to life and hope !

CRAMBO. We're going to make an eternal slope !

JAMBO. Comrades, our march to an end has come !

CRAMBO. We shall disappoint our tradesmen some !

ANGELO (*flapping his arms as wings*).

From this dark world we're going to mount !

CRAMBO. Snips, no hope for your little account !

VERMICELLI. Farewell, Love's young dream !

CRAMBO. We shall never pay for our milk and cream !

BIANCA. Closing round life is Death's dark hue !

CRAMBO. You're beginning to look uncommon blue !

JAMBO. Life is sweet, with all its blisters !

CRAMBO. We shall never marry our deceased wives'  
sisters !

ANGELO. Look we now in Doom's black face !

CRAMBO. Would anyone like to take my place ?

VERMICELLI. How very short is Life's brief span !

CRAMBO. Like a topical speech by the Grand Old Man !

---

[*The four diners commence to eat, CRAMBO retaining his seat.*]

CRAMBO. We ought to make our last Wills and Testaments !

JAMBO. 'Tis wisely said. Bring forth your pocket-book, Signor, and write as we dictate to thee.

[*CRAMBO draws pocket book from his coat, and prepares to write.*]

JAMBO. I bequeath my uniform to the beautiful Griffin at Temple Bar !

[*CRAMBO writes.*]

BIANCA. I give and bequeath, unfettered by any condition, for the use and benefit for ever of the City Corporation —my kind regards.

[*CRAMBO writes.*]

---

ANGELO. I leave my organ to the Home for Lost Dogs, and my coat and waiscoat (*flinging them off, very ragged ones*) to the Charity Organization Society.

[CRAMBO *writes*

VERMICELLI. I leave—I leave—I leave it to the Parish to defray the cost of my funeral !

[CRAMBO *writes.*

CRAMBO. And I leave all my debts to anybody who is fool enough to pay them.

[*Returns pocket-book to his pocket.*

JAMBO (*jumping up*). Comrades ! we must execute the dread Vendetta at once, or the Government will be down on us !

OMNES. What for ?

JAMBO. Why, it's just occurred to me that we've all been singing our sentiments in rhyme—in poetry—and not one of us has taken out a poetical license ! Signor Bastinado San La Crambo, get the dagger ready. Comrades, slow march !

---

[*The five march slowly to the front, and form near the settee or table near the centre.*]

We have but one dagger between us: we must so stand that it can be passed on.

[*They form in centre, thus:—*

VERMICELLI.

○

|        |   |   |         |
|--------|---|---|---------|
| CRAMBO | ○ | ○ | ANGELO. |
| JAMBO  | ○ | ○ | BIANCA  |

ANGELO. Signor Bastinado San La Crambo, let one of the ladies be accommodated first. Pass me the dagger.

[*CRAMBO hands ANGELO the dagger. ANGELO stabs BIANCA. BIANCA pulls out the dagger from her body, and stabs ANGELO, then falls on the settee, taking a table-cloth and enveloping herself. ANGELO falls on the settee next to her, and envelopes himself in another table-cloth.*

JAMBO. Confound him! he's got the dagger.

*Walks to ANGELO, pulls the dagger from his body and stabs VERMICELLI, VERMICELLI pulls out the dagger, stabs CRAMBO, and falls on the settee next to ANGELO, enveloping himself in a table-cloth like the others. CRAMBO pulls the dagger from his breast.*

CRAMBO (*thrusting his dagger into JAMBO*). Excuse the insinuation!

[*CRAMBO falls next to VERMICELLI, enveloping himself in the fourth table-cloth.*]

JAMBO. The last of the Mohicans!

[*Falls next to CRAMBO, enveloping himself in fifth table-cloth.*]

[*Each character groans as the stab is administered to him or her.*]

CURTAIN.



---

*Enter* STAGE MANAGER.

STAGE MANAGER. Ladies and Gentlemen, I am the Stage Manager. The Author having injudiciously killed off all his characters in the first Act, I regret to say that this thrilling tragedy cannot be continued any further. It is, however, usual to conclude operas and operettas with a chorus, and in order to preserve unbroken the traditions of opera, it has been arranged to resuscitate temporarily the five characters who have appeared in "La Vendetta," in order that they may sing you a species of ghostly chorus.

[*Exit.*

*Curtain rises.*

[CRAMBO, BIANCA, JAMBO, VERMICELLI, *and* ANGELO *discovered enveloped in their white sheets, and sing without removing their coverings, standing in same semi-circle as before (lights down).*

We quite forgot before we did our final meal assimilate—

Before, good friends in front, with blood our hands we did incriminate—

To thank the kind indulgence shown to all the faults  
displayed by us ;  
So now, with our good-bye to-night, this grateful debt  
is paid by us.

PICTURE *and* DROP CURTAIN



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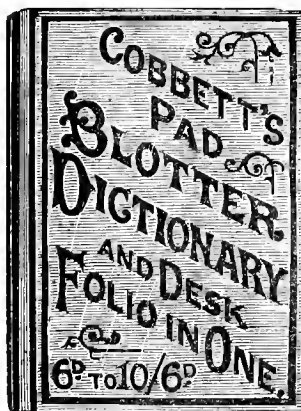
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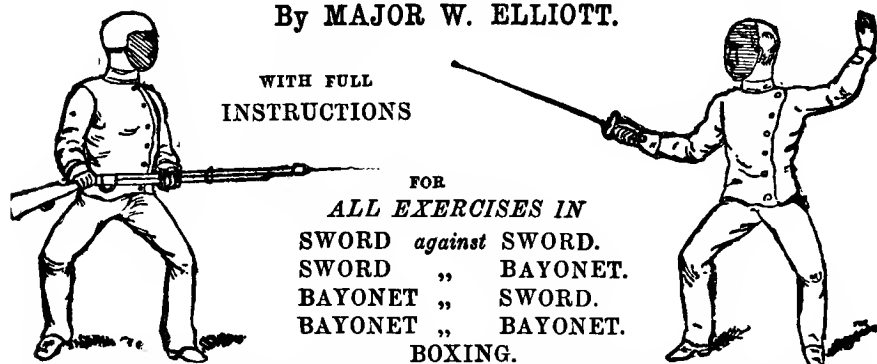


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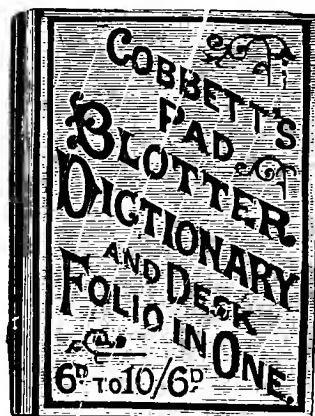
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